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*As the Sun colours the flower, so Art colours life.*"

# HE LITTLE MASTERS

CHT ALTDORFER, OF RATISBON; HANS SEBALD BEHAM,
F NÜRNBERG; BARTHEL BEHAM, OF NÜRNBERG;
HEINRICH ALDEGREVER, OF SOEST; GEORG
PENCZ, OF NÜRNBERG; JACOB
BINCK, OF COLOGNE;
HANS BROSAMER,
OF FULDA

23635 a.

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# PREFACE.

THE qualifications of the author for the task of writing this short Treatise are rather artistic than literary. It is both biographical and critical in the notices of the Artists, but in the historical portion he has been mainly a translator. Even the facts of the life of Albert Dürer have only of late years been fully elucidated, while the lives of the group of younger men, called The Little Masters, who surrounded him, and continued his practice in painting and engraving united, were very imperfectly known till Adolf Rosenberg published his *Sebald und Barthel Beham; zwei Maler der Deutschen Renaissance*, 1875; and *Die Deutschen Kleinmeister*, in the fourteenth and fifteenth parts of Dr. Robert Dohme's *Kunst und Künstler*.

Other authorities also came before him, but these monographs revealed many interesting particulars of the very

remarkable men under review, and to Dr. Rosenberg the author is bound to acknowledge his indebtedness. He has also to thank Mr. G. W. Reid, of the British Museum, and Professor Colvin, for their readiness in aiding him with details regarding some of the works.

The critical opinion expressed of the productions of these beloved Little Masters is another matter. They have been long known to me for the most part, as well as those of their contemporaries. Practically acquainted with both the arts—painting and engraving—practised in unison by them, the reader must receive the estimates and descriptions as exclusively mine, except when otherwise stated.

W. B. S.

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# THE LITTLE MASTERS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

THE group of artists to which this short treatise is devoted is associated together, not only in time and locality, but also in the more important characteristic of employing, not the palette and brush, but the Graver and Printing-press, as their means of expression. They were all truly in harmony with the spirit of the age in which they lived; the majority of them restless intellects as well as gifted painters, thus they adopted the new art, then immensely popular, of engraving; and in their works, and in those of the other painter-engravers immediately preceding them, we recognise the great change and development of northern art in the early part of the sixteenth century. This great change was from mediævalism to realism, from hagiology and clerical mythology to poetry and *genre*. For some years past the writer has been

attracted to the subject, and has found the period extraordinarily rich in invention and interesting in relation to the entire history of modern art, so that he hopes to make his readers share in some measure this interest, which may be possibly new to them.

II. Much has been written lately on the revival of classic things which changed the motives and tastes of Europe, mainly at first in literature, but very quickly in all the arts, especially architecture, but beginning with sculpture. In England, and in Germany especially, this period of Renaissance has employed the pens of able and learned inquirers, but the actual movement, slow but irresistible, took place not in the Teutonic division of our continent, but through the Latin nations, as we call them: mainly and first in Italy; then in France; and feebly in Spain. In Germany, indeed, although literature was touched by the æsthetic spirit, a quite different influence was at work, penetrating, like the power of spring, to the foundations of society and of all thought, which brought about the Reformation, coincident, or nearly so, with the spread of our plate-printing. The difference of the two movements is total and absolute. In Italy the higher clergy became essentially free of mediæval Christianity, but the intellectual obedience of the community remained as it was centuries before; whatever the moral character of the priest might be his authority was unquestioned, painters, like the rest of the community, showing no inclination even to entertain the great questions that were agitating the northern mind. We have scarcely any evidence that any one of the great Italian masters, except such as were monks, had any ideas whatever touching religion, morality, or the conduct of life. The Italian nature left these matters to the delegated

authorities, and did not trouble itself about them. The painter remained the servant of the Church till he became the servant of the prince: even portraiture busied itself only with the illustrious. Engraving never seemed worth cultivating as an original art: there was no public for it.

III. Until the time immediately preceding that with which we have to deal, that is to say, until the end of the fifteenth century, everywhere the art of painting was bound exclusively to the service of the Church; it took no cognisance of the aspects of contemporary life, and without any canon or other law to tie the hands of the painter, he continued to employ himself exclusively on altar-pieces and other devotional panels, with an occasional excursion into the mechanic work of heraldic decoration, or gave his aid to the transcriber for missal adornment.

IV. The earliest birth of the new taste was in Italy, though the spread of the classics, and its completer development founded largely on the discovery of ancient sculptures, broke up this exclusive use of "images," painted or sculptured, which had descended from the period of the great fight between the Eastern and Western ecclesiastical powers; and brought about the reign of the naked gods and goddesses of Greece and Rome, and this for the first time raised into existence the private purchaser, and carried the picture (other than portrait) within the walls of the household. Of course there were private claimants for the possession of these, otherwise they would never have been painted. This innovation, indeed, of painting employing itself on such unholy things, and not exclusively on Madonnas, unlovely enough before the naturalistic period, and on wretched old saints beating themselves with stones, or young ones tied up with arrows sticking in their flesh, or female saints sentimentally

holding the instruments of their martyrdoms, or even their eyes or other tender members on *pateræ*—pictures that no healthy man or woman would desire to possess except in a modern *dilettanti* spirit—formed one of the subjects of Savonarola's preaching; and the works themselves made a large part of the pile, to the base of which he applied the torch in front of the Palazzo Vecchio. This substitution of classic for Christian materials did not bring the arts of design one step nearer actual life or contemporary history. It interested the mass of the people less than the other; it was the privilege of the art of engraving which spread its products abroad in hundreds, to come home to the business and bosoms of the general public, and this we shall see the painter-engravers accomplish. The number of these pictures of classical mythology may not have been very great until a generation or two later, at all events we find few are left to us; one happily we have invaluable in the Medusa's head by Lionardo da Vinci, still preserved in the Pitti.

V. In Germany this change in painting from the mythology of the Roman Catholic Church to that of the Greek and Latin poets never took place. When it was attempted it was by means of engraving, and mainly at the hands of the Little Masters. Lucas of Leyden tried it, and his curiously naïve rendering of classic things, in the absence of teaching through classic remains, is very apt to raise a smile. But painting remained immobile. We find Albert Dürer, even at the time when the implicitness of his faith in the Old Church was giving way, painting altar-pieces, and complaining that he did not get adequately paid, protesting that he would have been soon a rich man if he had spent his whole time in the comparatively new miniature art of 'graving. Until the private purchaser entered the

field, painting must have been a badly remunerated profession, and even after the Fuggers of Augsburg had begun to collect pictures, more especially portraits however, and the Baumgartners and others were following in the same track, the new arts of miniature engraving on copper, or drawing on wood of a larger size, sometimes of enormous dimensions, for the *formschneider*, and of printing in successive tints, a rude sort of chromo-lithography, were all more remunerative. Thus we find not only Dürer and Cranach, but Burgkmair, Schaufflein, indeed every other German artist of the time, and even Hans Holbein a little later, employing themselves in one or other form of engraving. For all of these prints we claim more or less consideration, and for the best of them the highest respect, as the most elaborated expression of the noblest artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries north of the Alps, men whose invention was astonishingly rich and varied, but still, as in the middle ages, serious and ingenuous, though the Egyptian bondage had been loosened from their shoulders. A selection from the works of Schongauer and the few others who claim to be what the Italians call Quattrocentisti, and those that followed impetuously in their steps, Dürer and the Little Masters, a noble band of free-minded men and accomplished artists, who pass out of sight one by one about 1550, is a source of endless enjoyment. Smallness itself has the charm of refinement, and when associated with largeness of art gives us the noblest pleasure; their works have the freshness of the early days of modern civilisation; they are like boyhood in life, and possess the daringness of boyhood. Such a collection, I would venture to say, containing within itself the choicest flower and fruit of German art, affords to the intelligent the greatest fund of enjoyment of any posses-

sion within the region of taste. This is no doubt a great deal to say, and admitting, as we must of course do, that the ablest and greatest artists have, at least of late years, given their labour to easel pictures, it looks like an over-estimate of the painstaking but excursive and daring early artist-engravers. But let us consider for a very few sentences the difference between art with and without colour. Wherever colour appears all other qualities become subordinate, and yet it is simply an impression on the retina. Over and over I have found the friends I most respect, critically perceptive men and poets, entirely irresponsive to the charms of an exhibition room; they found nothing, except perhaps among the landscapes, that answered to their desires; receiving a pleasant impression of prismatic brightness being insufficient to them. But the same men set down before a portfolio and presented with Schongauer's *Wise and Foolish Virgins*, some of Lucas of Leyden and Albert Dürer's best works, and Aldegrever's *Dives and Lazarus*, let us say, have been, as it were, electrified, and have expressed themselves as Keats did on reading Chapman's Homer :—

> . . . "Like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken :
> Or like stout Cortes when with eagle eyes
> He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
> Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
> Silent upon a peak of Darien."

The charm of colour is the vulgar, or rather universal charm, and if the reader has any acquaintance with painters or collectors of pictures he will readily acknowledge that it is rather needless to speak to them of anything else. I may relate again an anecdote which has already been in print. The writer of this was taken to see Mr. Sheepshanks's

pictures at the time he proposed to give them to the nation. Struck by the mixture of comparatively common with refined works hanging side by side, we ventured to remark on the variety of his taste; he replied, as for that he did not know · tone and colour were what he valued himself, though he bought occasionally as he was recommended. He had ceased to collect pictures at that time, and led us in front of a new cabinet made of beautiful wood, touching the shining panels of which lovingly, he explained that he now enjoyed rare specimens of fine woods more than anything. The P. R. B. movement had just then attracted attention, and the works of the new school were much canvassed. Some one of the party asked him what he thought of them: he had not seen any such pictures. And this is the typical lover of pictures, especially English pictures, whether they be by our best men and possessed of noble qualities of design, or merely the chromo-lithograph for the Christmas number of the journal. The collector is a luxurious person, he hates sculpture because it is white, and the Little Masters because they are troublesome to examine. But the lover of the early painter-engravers is more an imaginative than a luxurious individual; he receives a new suggestion at every turn, a fresh æsthetic motive is exhibited by every print, he is interested by the sense of beauty struggling through the hardness of early modern life, and he partakes of the pleasure of these artists in an ungenial but exciting time expressing their fancies in a new medium, sure of popular regard.

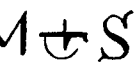
VI. We have further claims to make in favour of our painter-engravers north of the Alps. The principal of these claims has been already indicated, but is still worthy of being a little further insisted on. It was through them

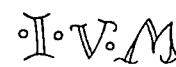
that the art of the middle ages first interested itself with the life of the day, first left the bondage of the Church; so that they are to be considered the originators of modern art. The mass of the people were for the first time appealed to, and all that interested the public depicted. The Renaissance resulted in Italy, as far as painting is concerned, in the direct importation of subjects from the ancient poets, and with the representation of the nude, a widening of the field that was but feebly felt in Germany, but instead we find commence the direct representation of scenes passing before the painter's eyes; the merry-making, wedding procession, and village fair—*Hochzeit, Bauernfest*, and many other scenes — *Sittenbildliche Darstellungen*, "manners-depicting representations," as they have been called, never seen till then, but which once seen have become more and more studied and enjoyed from that day till now. This development somehow or other was connected, or at least it proceeded parallel with the principle of liberty, social and religious, represented by the Reformation, then stirring the hearts of northern men and women in a way that no influence ever touched Italian life. It must be remembered, too, that Germany was the birthplace of printing, and, as is now generally conceded, of every form of engraving for the purpose of being multiplied and circulated by the press. First of all, woodcut pictures, generally stencilled, that is to say, stamped with colours added to the first printing, were either effigies of the Virgin and Saints on the one hand, or playing cards—the "devil's books"—on the other. Presumably these were not produced by trained artists, but by goldsmiths when worked on metal plates, and by rubricators, or block-book makers—this last a trade which originated the name of *formschneider*, applied to the wood-engraver—when cut

on wood. But very soon the influence of printing was wholly on the side of the Reformation movement; the number of portraits of Luther that appeared during his lifetime was enormous, and these were done by artists of every shade of excellence. In a few years, as the movement spread, the democratic art of engraving spread with it: design apart from the sensuous element of colour and apart from its association with the altar and the missal, design as conveying ideas, telling stories, or laden with instruction, took root, first in the free cities, Nürnberg, Frankfort, Leyden, then all over Germany, Holland, Flanders, Switzerland, France, and lastly in our own country, where unhappily every form of pictorial art remained exotic for a century and a half behind the rest of Europe. For nearly a century the illustration of books was the exclusive province of wood-engraving, the block being the height of the type and therefore capable of being set in the same *form*. Thus the painter-engraver sold separately the impressions from his plates, however small, resorting to themes of popular interest, "manners-depicting representations," allegoric figures of the virtues and vices, the planets and days of the week, and a hundred other semi-poetical devices, the labours of Hercules being included, and Bible histories represented dramatically in successive scenes.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE FORERUNNERS OF THE LITTLE MASTERS.


Martin Schongauer


Israhel van Mechenen.

Lucas of Leyden.

THE following pages treating, as already said, of artists represented by their almost exclusive employment of engraving, we ought to give a short sketch of that art itself previous to their appearance. In nearly all books hitherto treating of the origin and early history of printing from designs cut on metal plates, Vasari's ingenious account of the Florentine niello-worker who made the discovery of the possibility of taking impressions on paper instead of casting in sulphur, has been repeated, and until very lately, in spite of a hundred evidences and probabilities to the contrary, Italy has retained the honour of the invention. And not only of engraving proper, but of block-printing as well, Hugo da Carpi having claimed the credit of being the first to produce *chiaroscuro* prints by repeated stamping in the application he made to the Senate of Venice for a monopoly in practising that device. This prejudice has mainly resulted from the general fact that early German art has been until lately discredited, and such writers as Cumberland could not entertain any evidence in its

favour. The chance, too, that Raphael himself aided Marc' Antonio with his engravings gave the very miscellaneous productions of that copyist such an ascendency in the eyes of collectors that the entire inferiority of Italian engraving in manipulation, and in the fact of its being followed, not by original artists,* but only by copyists, was entirely overlooked. Vasari's date for the invention, which never took place, is 1460, but even in Italy the art was probably practised earlier than this; Baldini and others were certainly practising at that time, or a very few years later; the date 1465 has been found on an Italian print, one of a set of the months. But the number of German copper engravings still existing bearing internal evidence of being even earlier is very considerable, one of which, a Flagellation, forming part of a series of seven prints of the Passion, bears the date 1446, while the unknown master of 1466 (E. S.), probably of the school of Van Eyck, shows that the practice of minature engraving on copper was in full operation in his locality at that date, more than 200 engravings by him having now been catalogued. He must have had an atelier with many pupils, and as the prints that bear his mark are not rude incunabula, but are, in a considerable degree, accomplished works, he must have had a master. We are not aware that niello was generally practised in Germany, therefore this master, as well as the master of Schongauer, must have practised engraving

* The only painter of *original* power who engraved in Italy was Mantegna, whose prints are every way of high excellence and importance. He has been called, on the authority of Lomazzo, the inventor of engraving on copper. Boticelli is said to have spent much time in engraving; but if so he must have found the task too hard. Two of the illustrations to Nicholò della Magna's edition of Dante, 1481, are said to have been cut by himself, but I confess I can see no difference in style between these and the others by Baldini.

for other purposes, most probably printing, although by hand, being the principal.

VIII. This last-mentioned artist, the greatest name in early German art, except that of Albert Dürer, left about 130 engravings certainly from his hand, nearly 100 besides bear his mark, but are without his distinctive excellence; also many paintings, the majority of them however more than doubtful. He is supposed to have been born about 1420; his portraits about the age of thirty, of which there are three of a contemporary character, bearing the name and date, "Hipsch* Martin Schongauer, Maler, 1453," while the register of his death at Colmar, whither he went from his native Augsburg, proves him to have died in 1488. So that Dürer, when out of his apprenticeship to Wolgemuth in 1490, when he repaired to the Alsatian town, was disappointed to find him dead.† The master of 1466, besides the scenes from the Gospels, canonical and apochryphal, the *Gospel of Mary* being the favourite, and innumerable saints, gifts we may suppose given to children on their birthdays, left several improprieties of a decided sort, and a pack of cards, the suits not those now in use, of course, but birds, helmets, flowers, and shields. Schongauer, being evidently of a pious disposition, left none of these last, but almost entirely employed himself on pious themes, the sentiment of his drawing being as pure as that of Boticelli; and his prints have been amazingly well

* The old form of the word *hübsch*: Hubsch Maler, The Beautiful Painter.

† Here is the entry in the register of the church of St. Martin, his name-saint, it will be observed, found by M. Hugot, of Colmar: "Martinus Schongawer, Pictorum gloria le. v. so. (legavit quinque solides) pro anniversario suo et addidit 1 solidum 1 d. ad anniversarium paternum a quo habuit minus anniversarium. Obiit die purificationis Mariæ etc. LXXXVIII."

preserved, treated, no doubt, with respect by an orthodox public. This very respect, however, in the case of the master work of the "hübsch Martin" the print of the *Death of the Virgin* showing the twelve apostles all ministering in various ways to the dying Madonna, has been destructive rather than otherwise, several fine impressions (and the print is now very rare, having brought more than once as much as 200*l.*)* showing that they have been doubly folded to accommodate them to the small missals then becoming a common possession.

IX. Schongauer's sense of beauty led him to execute a set of peculiarly charming little figures, each on a separate plate, representing the Wise and Foolish Virgins. Marriages, in that part of Germany at least, were then celebrated, not at the altar, but in the porch. There was a particular entrance so appropriated in great churches called the "bride's door" (Die Braut-thüre), and the right-hand side of the porch was decorated with statuettes of the wise virgins of the parable, while the left had the five foolish ones. This very charming architectural device we find at St. Sebald's church in Nürnberg, Albert Dürer's parish church, and where, therefore, it is more than probable he was married to the troublesome Agnes. The same series of statues, much larger, we find at Strasburg Cathedral; these are admirably designed, and more than likely suggested to Schongauer, living at Colmar, his delightful little set of figures.

X. The engraver of greatest importance after Schongauer, but still preceding Dürer, entirely Teutonic in spirit as well

* Not, however, the highest price given for a print by Schongauer; Dr. Willshire, p. 295, first ed., gives a number of prices realised by his prints. At the Weigel auction, 1872, the *Coronation of the Virgin* a beautiful impression in perfect condition, brought 400*l.*

as birth, is Israhel van Mechenen. The comparatively small town of Bocholt was a considerable school of engraving at this early time, Franz van Bocholt being the master, Israhel and Wenceslaus the pupils, the former of whom went to live at Malines, and the latter at Oelmutz. All these men retained in their style of drawing a great deal of the "Gothic," no influence from the south seems to have ever touched them; but Israhel was certainly an artist of great powers, and versatile in their application. "Let him who is merry sing psalms." When Hübsch Martin unbent, he designed censers and other clerical furniture; but Mechenen began the practice that seems to have furnished these primitive artists with a considerable part of their income, of designing pages of pure ornament to be applied by artisans, armourers; casket-makers, principally in iron, a considerable trade; gold and silversmiths; and others. Besides, and much more interesting to us and to history, he was almost the first to turn to ordinary life for his subjects. Let me describe one of Israhel's little prints of this character, perhaps the most pleasing he has left.

XI. This is about five inches by four, representing an interior, and is called *The Organist*. The chamber organ, a small kind of which we often see in the arms of St. Cecilia, stands upon an oaken table of solid mediæval design; the musician, a spare, amiable young man, sits before it on a fald-stood playing. Behind the instrument, with her hand on the handle of the bellows that inflates it, sits on the table a girl, in plain attire, her head covered by a large head-dress, smoothly ironed, of a shape which prevailed with slight variations from the days of Van Eyck till about 1500. Over her head in the background are open doors of wall-presses, giving us peeps of handsome metal cups and platters, and further away is a large,

opening in the wall of the room, revealing the next apartment, which is a bedchamber, barely and neatly arranged. At the head of the bed are two little cushions as if for two heads, a matrimonial arrangement; but the singularly quiescent expression and vacant peacefulness of the two people, and their resemblance to each other, lead us to suppose them brother and sister. It is a charming picture of daily artistic life, two not very handsome and altogether unexcitable young people practising music. Of course Israhel, who lived till 1503, issued many pious subjects, but he also engraved a number such as we have described, still memorable after three centuries have passed.

XII. This mightily important change from the sacred to the profane, from the theological, or, as we may now say, from the mythological, to the secular and real, is so important, we will further illustrate it by describing a pair of prints by an artist not otherwise to be alluded to, perhaps, Matheus Zazinger. These prints, somewhat larger than usual, are both dated 1500. They are *The Great Ball* and *The Tourney*, or rather, *The Practising for the Tourney*. In the first the guests promenade in pairs in their tight hose and doublets, their long skirts and fine head-dresses. Duke Albert IV. of Bavaria sits in a bayed window playing at cards with a great dame, marking their score on the table as we see the players do in the cabaret interiors by Ostade. The musicians are in two little galleries, with long wind instruments; an attendant brings in the loving-cup half covered by a cloth, and a porter keeping the door is freely using his stick to repress the inquisitive crowd who push in their heads at the opening.

XIII. The other design, *Practising for the Tourney*, is equally reliable as a page of actual history. In the *grand-place*, the centre of a town, presumably Augsburg, the

ambitious youths, the *jeunesse dorée*, practise with the large lance for the coming tournament. The ground is thickly strewn with rushes, and their horses are covered, head and all, with plain white surcoats. On these blindfolded chargers they run together and unhorse each other. The armour worn by these youths is of course the solid plate-armour of the time, the helmet being the *burgonet* with a pointed beak from the chin, effectually preventing damage to the face, and without the great plumes of feathers so surprising in the grand tournaments of Lucas Cranach, published a few years later, when we see the horses are clothed in their gorgeously embroidered heraldry. In Zazinger's scene there is no crowd, no spectators at all indeed, but the streets are accurately depicted in the background, every house different from its neighbour, some having open shops, among which an apothecary's is recognisable by his pestle and mortar and other belongings. We may suppose this rehearsal went on for weeks preparatory to the great day shown in Lucas Cranach's woodcuts, before the court and the people, like the months of exercise and training before a modern horse-race.

XIV. These men lived to see the culmination of the art in its most legitimate and primitive phase, that is to say, the quite masterly rendering of form and texture by means of the graver, the absolute command of expression and freedom of design by Dürer, Lucas of Leyden and others; the full development of light-and-shade being left for etching and other processes, which gradually superseded the noble simplicity of the earlier workmanship, the exclusive use of the graver.

## CHAPTER III.

### DÜRER, THE REPUTED TEACHER OF THE LITTLE MASTERS.

Jacob Walch.

Albert Dürer.

THERE still intervenes between the manhood of Albert Dürer and the more or less primitive, though progressive, experts just named, an artist of extraordinary ability in the new art, without whom, indeed, the appearance of Albert's *Adam and Eve* in 1504 would have been little short of a miracle. This was the painter called by the Germans Jacob Walch, or Wälsch, "Jacob the Italian," and by the Italians, Jacopo di Barbari, or Barbarino, which may have been a colloquial form of a term applied by self-conceited Italians to any people or person beyond the Alps, "Jacob the barbarian." This interpretation has at least been ventured in the controversy regarding the native country of Jacob, who has been esteemed a German till very lately, but who is now made over to the Venetians. This is quite certain, he resided in Nürnberg at the end of the fifteenth century as a painter, and no doubt acquired his proficiency in engraving there,

and most probably produced there his *St. Sebastian*, the most skilful piece of elaboration of the human face and naked body with the graver seen until then. The engravings of Jacopo seem to have been entirely unknown in Italy: they are printed on paper with the northern watermarks, and though he returned to Venice for a period, when he made for a Nürnberg merchant there resident a bird's-eye view of immense size of that city. It is true some of the early and best engravings of Marc' Antonio, before he took to manufacture by the employment of various hands, show a refinement which may have been derived from Jacopo. The very rare early print, for instance, called *St. Jerôme au petit lion*, probably executed in Venice from a drawing by Bellini, is not like his later work, but much more like that of Jacopo. That he studied Walch is however only conjectural, while we know for certain he was immensely influenced by Dürer, and spent years in copying him.

XVI. Whether Jacob Walch, who is otherwise called the master of the Caduceus, had any share in educating Marc' Antonio, who was not so much a great craftsman with the graver as an excellent draftsman able to render the *ipsissima linea*, if we may use the term, of the greatest of painters, I think there can be no doubt of his having shown the way to Albert Dürer. We should remember that the last-named must have acquired his extraordinary skill by having been suddenly inducted into the mysteries of the craft. We have nothing from his hand of an early time, as we have by Lucas of Leyden, who dated his works, and thus gave incontestable evidence of having begun at the age of twelve to produce curiously skilful renderings of his boyish inventions. Dürer was in the atelier of Wolgemuth till 1490-1, and that his master, as far as we know him,

was something of a painter, and a productive draftsman on wood of the old school, and "Gothic" to a degree, we see by the cuts in the *Nürnberg Chronicle*, but not an engraver on copper at all. And we know Albert's thorough acquaintance with, and high estimation of, Jacob Walch, expressed in his letters and Journal. He mentions Jacob indeed exclusively as a painter, but we have only to compare Dürer's small prints of *Apollo and Diana*, and *The Satyr's Family*, with those of the same subjects by Walch, to see that he did not scruple even to imitate him, by adopting his subjects. Jacopo's design and style are thoroughly Italian, and show an intimate acquaintance with the antique and obedience to Renaissance tastes, but to Albert these subjects were quite foreign, he being to the last drop of his blood thoroughly German, though exceptionally so, both in person and in mind handsomer and nobler * than either burgher or patrician moving about him. When Albert in his *wanderjahre* went to Colmar, he found Schongauer dead, so that there is no other but Walch to whom he needed to be indebted, and in Walch we have no hesitation to find him a master. He informs Perkheimer from Venice in 1506 that he finds there are better painters in the city than Jacob, who had by that time gone to the north in the train of Philippe of Burgundy. Had Vasari ever met either of them in the flesh, we should have had a document worth every other regarding them. As it is, his account of the Nürnberg master, whom he always calls a

* Compare the portraits of Dürer with those of Perkheimer, Duke Frederick of Saxony, Jan Baumgartner by Burkgmair, Lucas Cranach, or any other genuine Frankonian or Saxon, his contemporaries: the difference is startling! Every head, it has been said, belongs to its own time and to no other, but that of Albert is certainly an exception to the rule.

Fleming, is interesting. "Had this man," he says, "so nobly endowed by nature, so assiduous, and possessed of so many talents, been a native of Tuscany instead of Flanders, had he been able to study the treasures of Rome and Florence as we have done, he would have excelled us all, as he is now the best and most esteemed among his own countrymen!" He says further, speaking of the terrible visions of St. John in the Island of Patmos, so adequately drawn by Dürer, "The variety of the forms which Albert has imagined for all those visionary animals and monsters, has indeed been a beacon to many of our artists, who have largely availed themselves of the fancies and inventions of the Flemish master."

XVII. We must always remember that there were several distinct schools of engraving north of the Alps, although it is not necessary to go into their minute distinctions here. Suddenly by the influence of Dürer, that of Nürnberg eclipsed all the others, and even when the fame of Lucas of Leyden almost equalled that of Albert, he had little or no influence in diminishing that supremacy. We know of no pupils or scholars, or aids of any kind he drew about him, and certainly his prints show a perfect unity of manner along with the progressive development of his genius and amelioration of his style, while we are well assured that Dürer had the help of several able hands. Not that we see any marks of these in the execution of his copper engravings, but in those primitive times, as the painter prepared his own colours, the engraver printed his own plates. Vasari says of Marc' Antonio, that his works were soon more highly esteemed than those of the "Flemings," because of the greater amenity of Raphael's design, and that the merchants, drawing large gains by the sale of them, caused Raphael to make his colour-grinder, a

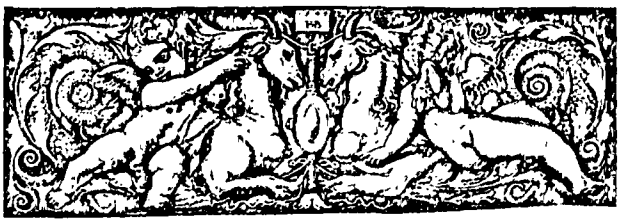
young man he had had many years, called Baviera, teach himself to print, Marc' Antonio having hitherto been his own printer! After this they went on at a tremendous rate, Marc' Antonio having all his time to himself, and made "great gains to the master." So it must have been with Albert, only we are very certain that his two younger brothers, Hans and Andrew, were both under his care, and that he also had Hans Springinklee in his employment for a great many years, and for some part of the time Hans von Kulmbach as well. It is implied, indeed, by Rosenberg, that these two artists, Springinklee being only known to us as a designer on wood, but Kulmbach as a painter as well as designer, were the only two articled pupils, that is, apprentices, he had. He thinks the two Behams and Georg Pencz may have served him in some degree, but he also mentions Schäufelein, the prolific designer in wood, and Erhard Schön, besides Springinklee and Von Kulmbach in the same possible category. Neudörfer, nevertheless, affirms that Von Kulmbach was a pupil of Jacob Walch. Neudörfer, writing so early as 1550, ought to carry weight, but this would necessitate the supposition of Jacob having settled down for many years in Nürnberg, and taken his position as a citizen.* This is a matter of some importance, as we shall find, although the Little Masters appear to have been drawn together by the celebrity of Albert Dürer, we cannot identify any of them with certainty to have been educated in his atelier, to have been actually his "junker," his apprentice. It is not too much to suppose that the presence of the greatest genius then practising art was the reason for this extraordinary gathering of talent. The Behams and Georg Pencz

* See Kunst und Künstler, 14te Lieferung, p. 6.

were natives of the city, but Altdorfer was from a distance, Aldegrever was a Westphalian, Brosamer of Fulda. This kind of manipulative skill was, as it were, in the air at the time, and the atmosphere round Albert Dürer and his establishment at the Thiergarten Gate of Nürnberg, where Adam Kraft was still working on his sculptured "Stations" between the Gate and St. John's, and whence was annually issuing such exhaustless wealth of design so skilfully rendered, may be easily supposed to have been more inspiring than that of any other locality.

XIX. The few prints by Dürer to which we may apply the term juvenile or imperfect, *The Wild Man* (B. 92) excepted, are not so rude as to suppose them to have been done in boyhood under his father's eye, who, as a goldsmith, would be to some extent acquainted with engraving. But the number supposed to have been produced before 1500-1, while Jacob Walch was resident in Nürnberg, extends to twenty, among which are to be found *The Four Naked Women* (B. 75), *Apollo and Diana* (B. 68), *The Madonna on the Half-moon* (B. 30), *The Prodigal Son* (B. 28), and a very few years after we come to his most accomplished work, the *Adam and Eve* (B. 1), dated 1504, and the *Nativity* (B. 2), while the Shield with the Death's Head bears date the year before. Again, at the time when the Little Masters would be, all except Altdorfer who was older than the others by twenty years, commencing their pupilage, and aspiring to mastership, his greater works were presumably accomplished; *The Knight and Death* is dated 1513, the *Melancholy* and *Jerome in his Cell*, 1514. The *Great Fortune* and *St. Hubert* were possibly the productions of the three succeeding years. If, therefore, Aldegrever and the Behams, who would then be fourteen to seventeen years

of age, and Georg Pencz also, all of them having been born close to the beginning of the century, were not actually his apprentices, they must have watched the appearance of every new production, and emulated their excellences. They would, most probably, be all known to each other; they would have their rivalries and their mutual encouragements, as well as jealousies; a recognisable coterie in the busy, free, but still imperial city of Nürnberg.



## CHAPTER IV.

### ALBRECHT ALTDORFER.

WE now come to the Little Masters themselves, and we must begin with Albrecht Altdorfer, on account of his preceding the others in time, though not in excellence. In my opinion, the two Behams, Aldegrever, and Pencz are all before him in power of drawing and in inventive design, as well as in craftsmanship as engravers; at the same time, Altdorfer has a distinct individuality as interesting as any of them, that raises him in the opinion of some critics to the level of the best. He is, moreover, the most versatile, and in his own day was more recognised as an architect than as a pictorial artist, although now we only judge him by his prints, engraved on copper, or etched, and by his designs drawn on wood: the oil pictures left by him being also important in our modern estimate of his powers. Although he was not an obscure individual, but on the contrary held in high esteem, especially in his adopted city of Ratisbon, the certain facts of his life are not many, especially of the earlier part of his career.

Until a few years ago, the date of Altdorfer's birth was

supposed to have been 1488, but as he is now found to have been entered as a burgher of Ratisbon in 1505, and must have attained the age of twenty-five at that time, he must have been born in 1480, so that he was only nine years younger than Albert Dürer himself. This would be little objection to his entering as pupil of that master, or to his being actually bound to him for a term of years, but it detaches him from the rest of the artists that go by the common term, "Kleinmeister," Little Masters, a term which they acquired by the exceedingly small size of the majority of their works. Georges Duplessis, indeed, in his amusing little book called *Les Merveilles de la Gravure*, gives Albrecht Altdorfer the merit of having been the originator of this practice, so that he is not only one of them, but must be considered to have led them into the habit that originated the name. He was probably the son of Ulrich Altdorfer, a painter, but whether Ratisbon, where he ultimately lived and died, was the place of his birth, is uncertain, his father having renounced or lost his citizenship in 1491, it is supposed through absence, having probably left the city, and failed to return within the time prescribed by law in those days, when membership of a guild was necessary to enable any one to practise a trade or profession within the jurisdiction of the Rath. The tradition was that Albrecht was born at Altdorf in Switzerland, and was called after the place; but the name is recognised as that of a Ratisbon family, and Herr Wilde, a senator in that city about a century ago, found reason to believe his native place was Altdorf near Landshut, in Bavaria. There is an Altdorf (the name means simply old village or steading) near Nürnberg also, to which he has been accredited, but without any reason, except the convenient one of bringing him to the neighbourhood. Herr Wilde showed documentary

evidence that Altdorfers were established in Ratisbon in the fifteenth century, and that Albrecht himself appears in the burgher list early in the following century, although it does not appear he was fortunate enough to find the actual entry of Albrecht Altdorfer in the guild in 1505, which we take on the authority of Rosenberg.

The son of a painter, it is to be supposed he would be early instructed in the art, but in the absence of any evidence of his father's ability either to paint or to teach, we can very well believe that the elder Altdorfer may have modestly wished the boy to go into the *atelier* of the ablest artist of the day, or the one in whom he, with professional insight, recognised the highest qualities. If this was so, and the authority we shall mainly follow in stating the facts of the lives, not only of Altdorfer, but also of others of the Little Masters, Dr. Adolf Rosenberg, accepts the likelihood that Dürer was his real master, the beginning of his term of pupilage must have coincided with the commencement of Dürer's housekeeping. In 1494, when the young Altdorfer would be fourteen, Dürer's marriage took place, and he, with the youthful Agnes, took possession of the large house at the Thiergarten Gate of the city, he being twenty-three and Agnes much younger. Altdorfer would thus be the first of Dürer's pupils, and the fact of Dürer going into the large house, still shown to the traveller, in the interesting city one of the most interesting places, adds to the probability of his immediately taking a pupil or apprentice. At that time the 'prentice lived in his master's house, and made himself useful as a servant in the household as well as in the workshop, so that it might be useful to the newly-married to have the boy of fourteen in the establishment.

This would make the pupil able to take the citizenship of

Nürnberg, but his father having been at one time a citizen of Ratisbon, and possibly the existence of many friends there, carried Altdorfer back to that city. It seems there did exist a drawing by Dürer with the date 1509, and an inscription in praise of Altdorfer—a drawing which is now nowhere to be found. But if this drawing ever existed, it must have been done eight years or so after the parting of master and pupil, as there is evidence of his arrival in Ratisbon from Amberg, where he had lived some time, in 1505, and of his admission to the burgher rights of the city in the same year. Also in that year 1509 the Rath or town council paid him ten gulden for a picture painted for the choir of the church of St. Peter. The earlier years of his residence in the native seat of his family it is supposed were chiefly engaged in easel pictures. But he was a man of resources of the most varied kind, and, though concerned with many forms of art, "architect, painter, engraver, and etcher, draftsman, and water-colourist," and moreover said by tradition to have engraved on the wood his own drawings, he soon became most occupied in building affairs, and we find him elected by the city as "Oberster Bauherr," which we may translate City Architect.

A close acquaintance with the history of Albert Dürer reveals to us some interesting points in his history, and this household life of the first years of marriage with the boy Altdorfer as his apprentice is one of these. We wish that we could find some internal evidence in the similarity of his style of drawing or in his execution as an engraver with the great Nürnberg Albert. But this is not to be found. Such evidence would be almost conclusive that he had been under Dürer's instruction, but the absence of it is a very strong argument against this having been the case. I look upon Altdorfer's power of drawing as defective, although

in some cases, as in the woodcut (B. 49) in which a young man with clasped hands kneels before the Virgin and Divine child, we see very excellent form ably expressed. But even here a cherub playing a mandoline in the corner of the picture is very abortive, and the Madonna herself we take it is from some celebrated statue then in repute. Rosenberg says, what he had best learned from Dürer was the love of nature in all her minute details, and the directness and simplicity of his design. He considers that Altdorfer carried away from the Nürnberg master also much of the character of the head, and something of the style of drawing, which however became much more fantastic in his practice, which last critical point I quite agree with. He further considers Altdorfer's choice of subject, resort to natural objects, and treatment of his picture has something of his reputed master. We see how he thus brought forward into more prominence what Dürer had loved and lovingly indicated, but had not followed out, namely landscape painting. But neither, in this direction, he goes on to say, can we with precision point to any one instance, wherein Altdorfer has carried out Dürer's indications. There are general characteristics in Altdorfer's works that seem to have proceeded from Dürer, but scarcely specific enough to insist upon.

Dürer's love of nature was a love of detail, it appears to me. He studied with the exactness of a botanist a single specimen of a plant; he recorded with his brush the cleavage and the fissures of a rock, so that a geologist would find his drawing satisfactory. This is the case in a water-colour drawing in the large black volume of sketches left by Sir Hans Sloane, now in the British Museum, and we all know the loving precision that delights the ornithologist, in the drawings of birds' wings by him,

But we do not find this in Altdorfer; he does not give us an object like a seedling dock, for example, showing the whole nature of that gigantic weed, on the contrary his bias for landscape leads him to represent whole scenes with no distraction of figures or other interest, and with little individual study of objects. But it is admitted he has not left any paintings of this kind, as Rosenberg says, "any landscapes in the modern sense." It is his small etchings that give him the claim to be considered "the Father of Landscape Painting," and also his method of embodying his figure compositions within forests of curious trees, the fir-tree having a peculiar charm to him, and vast backgrounds of varied ruins and mountains. We have already dwelt on the important work of the early German engravers in leading painting to the illustration of actual life, to the creation of *genre* indeed, and in the person of Altdorfer we find the origin to some extent of landscape painting is to be added to the other merits of the Little Masters.

The production of his engravings in all probability went on busily during the earlier years of his life in Ratisbon. Few of them bear dates, but such as do show they were mainly executed before he was made Bauherr, and began his building operations for the city: 1506, 7, 9, 11, and up to 14 are the dates we find on his copper engravings. On his etchings of landscape—three upright subjects, and six lengthwise—no dates appear. The question whether Altdorfer was or was not an exception to the general rule of the artists of that time who drew on wood for the "formschneider" or wood-engraver, but did not cut themselves, Rosenberg does not entertain, still I think there are reasons for discussing it, and may in a future page, as we must here return to the incidents of his life.

In 1513 he had begun to be a prosperous man, and was already to some extent rich, as we see by his purchase of the house still existing, though unfortunately with a new façade, and shown to strangers as one of the principal lions of Ratisbon. This house must have been then, as it is now, one of the most stately mansions in the city, having a tower and a noble court, and standing, like Dürer's, in one of the best situations, near St. Veitsbach, by the Augustines. In 1518 the record exists of his purchasing a second house, apparently as an investment; and in the following year he was elected in the outer council of the Rath, or governing body of the city. In this capacity he must have assisted, at least by voting in the assembly, the infamous persecution of the Jews which then took place. Whether the destruction of the synagogue took place before the proclamation of banishment, which drove away the Jews with their families and movable property, cannot be certainly ascertained. Apparently this had been an ebullition of fanaticism on the part of the citizens, and we must acquit Altdorfer of any participation in so violent an act. He was not more enlightened than his fellows, we may admit, and he apparently profited by the ruin, possibly as one of the town-council. He appropriated a number of gravestones from the court of the synagogue, and used them as pavement for some part of his own house—the house with the tower—a fact still proved by their existence after all these years.

In Roman Catholic countries the Jews have always been subject to attacks from a furious, ignorant populace, but it is seldom we have such curious evidences remaining of the various stages of the pious madness. Altdorfer sketched the interior of the porch of the building, and the interior of the synagogue itself, and etched them

out of a feeling of curiosity, it may have been; but we shall see that he made money in various ways out of the disgraceful event. These etchings we are inclined to consider among the most advanced production of the day, giving the natural daylight effect to the dark architectural interior. On the view of the porch, which is a vaulted vestibule, with some peculiar features of Southern German Gothic, is the inscription: "*Porticus Sinagogæ Judaicæ Ratisponen. Fracta* 21 *die Feb. Ann.* 1591." On that of the interior itself: "*Anno dñi DXIX. judaici Ratispona Synagogæ justo dei judicio fundit. est eversa.*" To celebrate this righteous triumph of the Church there began miracles and wonders, wrought and seen on the spot, and a great pilgrimage took place. The clergy highly approving of this as a revival of faith, a procession was organised to add to the display, for which Altdorfer was employed to paint a banner, exhibiting the Virgin and Child in the brightest colours, with the city heraldry below. He also published one of the most noted of his works, *The Madonna of Ratisbon* (B. 12), a woodcut about fourteen inches high, and stamped with colours. This is now very rare, and though not one of the first *chiaroscuros*, is one of the most interesting. Rosenberg says it was printed in four colours or five—red, green, blue, flesh-colour, and black—so that it made a near approach to chromo-printing, and must have been a new experiment. The thousands of pilgrims bought this no doubt with a feeling that the print itself was one of the miracles. It represents the much venerated figure then in the cathedral of the city: the Virgin holds the Child in her arms, and the group is shown behind a balcony, on which stands a vessel of flowers, and below is the inscription, repeated three times: *Gantz schön bistu mein freundtin, und ein*

*mackel ist nit in dir, Ave Maria!*—"Altogether beautiful art thou, and a spot is not in thee." On the site of the destroyed building, a site so distinguished by miracles, the worthy people erected a church to the "Immacule Conception;" and the largest woodcut Altdorfer did, 23 inches by 18½, which had escaped all notice till Passavant published *Le Peintre Graveur* in 1862, is an exterior view of this church. This print, which is a *chiaroscuro*, is not in the British Museum, and I can't describe it further than that it has "the image of the Conception" (whatever that may be) above, with the arms of the city, and a kind of doggerel sonnet in Latin and German, relating to the history of the Church. The pious burghers and wise town-council, these verses say, could no longer bear the load of usury exacted from them, and on the feast of St. Peter's Chair, 1519, they drove out every Jew, male and female, and left not one stone upon another of their synagogue. On which "our beautiful Mary," approving, it would seem, this violent method of paying debts, began working miracles on the spot, so that the blind saw, the lame walked, and the crooked became straight.

It is to be hoped that our artist was not one of the debtors who, buying their houses with borrowed money, cancelled their bonds and cleared off the interest upon them in this summary way! But from all the circumstances, and from these inscriptions, it will be seen that Altdorfer, unlike all the other northern artists with whose histories we are acquainted, and unlike nearly all the men of genius of the age, continued an adherent of the mediæval church His settled residence in Ratisbon necessitated that, indeed.; and his position there, first as town-councillor, then as member of the inner council—alderman, we may say—was not possible to be held by him,

if he had not been very orthodox in the eyes of both clerical and lay portions of a community who drove out the Hebrews so unjustly, and who were so credulous. At this time he was not the city architect, and may have had little connection with the new church, appearing still in the character of painter, receiving from the town funds a gold gulden for painting the frontal for the relique-shrine in the chapel of the Holy Mary. Shortly after he does appear as the servant of the State, and seems to begin his duties about 1526. In 1527 he built the wine-stall (*winestadel*) and the flesh-market and slaughter-house—still in use—solidly built, and likely to endure in the future. In 1528 he was active as a justice of the peace, and afterwards for a time was chosen *bürgermeister*. He was in this honourable position while he was employed painting for the Duke William of Bavaria his greatest picture, the *Battle of Arbela*, where Alexander overcame Darius, now to be seen in the Pinacothec, Munich—a surprising performance. It is five feet high, by only four broad, yet it contains thousands of fighting men on horseback or foot. It has no classic or ideal character; this had never entered his head, even at the time when the Renaissance had completed its work in Italy. It is a great mixed fight of *Ritters* and *Landsknechts* of the sixteenth century. This picture was finished in 1529, and bears the signature, "Albrecht Altdorfer zū Regensberg fecit." It was one of five commissioned by the Duke; Burkgmaier, Görg Brew, and Melchior Feselen being the other artists; amongst these, Altdorfer's composition was distinguished by the amazing exactitude and multiplicity of details, as well as by his peculiar *bizarrerie*. The arms, armour, harness, heraldry, are all exceedingly finished and studied.

We cannot, of course, do otherwise than respect this versatile genius for a conscientious adhesion to the ancient faith, and the circumstance that now transpires that in his last years he was at least partially advocating the cause of the Reformation with the small degree of liberty involved in allowing a friend of Luther to preach in Ratisbon, is greatly in favour of his having been a sincere believer in the propriety of the expulsion of the Jews, and the honesty of the miracle-workers on the site of the destroyed synagogue. He was one of the fifteen members of the Rath, or town-council, who wished to get passed a permission for "Herrn Dr. Johann Hiltner," a friend of Luther, to hold forth in a Ratisbon pulpit. He was to the end a votary of the Madonna, but we must remember that the Marian-cultus, approaching so near worship, continued in southern Germany in many reformed households. In the absence of a date on the miniature portrait of Luther from his hand, engraved on copper, it may not be going too far to connect that small gem with these late days of his busy life. Had he lived to an advanced age we might have expected new developments from a man of his restless and varied talents, although not in the domain of the fine arts, as we do not see any progressive character in his work. In the numerous designs by Lucas of Leyden, we may truly say the history of his years is written in the wonderfully certain advance shown by them, from the childishness of the earliest to the emancipated Italianesque drawing and expression of his latest engravings and drawings, few as we have of the latter. But in the last decade of his life we have few works of art from Altdorfer's hand, no engravings, and few paintings with dates within that period, but his architectural labours are perhaps enough to account for the absence of other activities. In connection

with his office of city architect we have one date. On the old market-tower a leaden tablet has remained, with the words, "Albrecht Altdorfer, Paumeistr, 1535," which thus identifies him with another public building in the town.

Altdorfer died at the age of fifty-eight, on the 14th of February, 1538, and was buried in the church of the Augustines, close to where he lived, and for which he had painted. His will is found to have been made two days before, and his brother Erhard is partly his heir. This brother was also a painter, the court painter to Duke Henry in Schwerin, but after Albrecht's death he came to reside in Ratisbon for some time, but no direct descendants are mentioned, so that the name disappears from art. The church in which he was buried was taken down in 1840, when a part of the gravestone of our artist came to light, sufficiently identified by the two words and a half inscribed upon the broken fragment, "Albrecht Altdorfer, Paum . . ."

## CHAPTER V.

### ALBRECHT ALTDORFER'S WORKS.

UNTIL lately all the old artists who published their designs on wood were supposed to have been their own engravers. This notion was peculiarly an English one, perhaps because Thomas Bewick, who has the credit of having revived wood-engraving, and some of his pupils, (particularly Luke Clennel) have drawn their own engravings. But the difficult art of wood-engraving was in Germany a refinement on the trade of block book cutting, and employed many hands more or less skilful, who depended on having the subject to be engraved carefully and precisely drawn for them on the surface of the wood. This was presumably done by the pen and Indian ink, and encouraged the habit of drawing with the point, common to all the early masters. Some of these drawings now to be seen either in national or private collections, and which the late exhibitions held by Sir Coutts Lindsay and the Royal Academy have made the public acquainted with, are quite like the preparatory work of the designer for the engraver. Altdorfer, in particular, has left us such drawings done with the brush on a dark ground in white, one of which we are able to give as an illustration.

Still, this idea that all the early masters, including

Dürer, engraved on wood more or less, has been maintained and reluctantly given up. Ottley held out for two of that great artist's works on wood having been most probably by his own hand, they were so finely expressive of the painter's feeling. But in an art mechanically difficult, the result of a partial application of the designer's hand would have been exactly the opposite! Instead of exceeding the precision of the regular practitioner, he would have fallen below him, and failed in the necessary refinement. The set of blocks of the *Little Passion*, as the thirty-seven designs by Albert Dürer are called, which were republished by Sir Henry Cole, one of the many good things that gentleman has done for English taste, are now deposited in the British Museum. Mr. W. J. Linton, the most able perhaps of our many able wood-engravers, accompanied the writer for the purpose of examining them, and he assured me after a close inspection through a microscope, that he could, with his practised eye, discover differences in the handling of the graver on the different blocks, that proved to him satisfactorily that many different hands had executed them. This was only confirming what has of late years been proved over and over again, but still there remained one designer who was supposed to have been his own engraver, and that was Altdorfer.

This exception in favour of Altdorfer's versatility or economy, was made on account of the extreme fineness and closeness of the lines employed by him. If the reader could examine one of the cuts in the set of forty, *The Fall and Redemption of Man*, which are smaller in size than any other similar series on this never-failing orthodox subject, as if to favour the minute treatment, he will readily admit that every line could not have been conveniently *drawn* by Altdorfer, and it is certain, from an inspection of all

contemporary woodcuts, that every line to be left in the cutting was first drawn by the designer on the block. This extremely fine, closely-serried character of the strokes is peculiar to Altdorfer. The consequence of this habit of the artist drawing with ink on the wood, is that all old woodcuts are masterpieces of draftsmanship; they are effective sketches excellent in proportion to the power of the artist and the sensibility of hand exhibited by the engraver, while the shading and general effect is often exceedingly coarse. There is very little of this character in Altdorfer's prints on wood, they are elaborately fine, not boldly effective. The understanding, not only of the other Little Masters, but of all who practised both on copper and wood, was that graving proper, *i.e.* incision on copper, was for miniature size, and that minutiæ was its charm; whereas wood engraving, then executed on the plank, not on sections across the grain of the timber, was best adapted for large prints. All this is reversed in the practice of Altdorfer, his *Fall and Redemption* series is composed of designs scarcely three inches by two, and no other of his productions show any of the pen-and-ink sketching alluded to. His largest and finest print, *The Madonna of Ratisbon*, is only $13\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $9\frac{5}{8}$, and is printed from several blocks as already described. There is another, *Madonna standing on a Crescent*, with the infant in her arms over an altar, with SS. Christopher and Barbara on one side, and SS. George and Catherine on the other (B. 50), which is $11\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $8\frac{1}{2}$, and a *Resurrection of Christ*, 9 inches by 7, but these sizes, especially when many figures are represented, as in the last named, do not admit bold drawing, but show the same fine strokes which he could not have expressed by pen or brush for the guidance of another without a waste of patience and time.

In my own small collection is an impression of the *Resurrection of Christ*, which possesses another feature peculiar among old woodcuts. The earliest engravers, even the greatest masters, as Dürer and Mantegna, printed their own plates, as we have seen Marc' Antonio did till Raphael made his colour-grinder relieve that engraver; or at least following the same example had them printed under their own eye in their own *ateliers;* and indeed sold them too. On none of the prints I have examined of an early date have I observed what modern printers so constantly practise, that is, overlaying and padding up the *form* with pieces of paper, so as to make the pressure on one portion of the picture to be greater than on another. But in this *Resurrection* by Altdorfer, I find this has been done, the entire figure of our Lord, who appears within a *vesica* shape of clouds in the sky, being apparently padded so as to print darker, while the clouds all round are relieved of the pressure, and made to print comparatively fainter. This is a small technical matter, but it looks like the device of a man who understands the practice of wood-cutting, and so has been the first to fall upon the plan of modifying the impression, and as a good deal has been said about Altdorfer having been probably the exception among the early artists, who drew but did not engrave on the wood I think it worth recording. The probability of our hero falling upon contrivances such as that indicated, is increased by the proof of his being practical in other matters, and from his filling the post of city architect, we may suppose him ready in mechanical contrivances.

The number of his woodcuts is not very great, being under seventy. The larger of these we have mentioned. The whole, with the exception of four of small dimensions,

are Bible subjects, or figures of saints, SS. Christopher, George, Jerome, over and over again, the series called the *Fall and Redemption of Man* being included in the above number. The exceptional four represent *The Judgment of Paris*, *Thisbe weeping over the dead body of Pyramus*, *A Standard-bearer*, and *A Cavalier and a Lady seated in conversation.*

Albert Dürer's *Little Passion* on wood containing thirty-seven subjects, was issued in 1511, when Altdorfer was thirty-one, and as the subjects from the first, *Adam and Eve eating the Forbidden Fruit*, till near the last, are the same, we may suppose our artist undertook his set after the example of his former master. The great difference lies in the greater attention given to the Virgin Mary by the Ratisbon artist, her history being largely embodied with that of the Redeemer to please a Ratisbon public. We have thus the High Priest refusing the offering of Joachim and Anna; the Angel appearing to Joachim at the sheep-fold; Joachim and Anna's meeting at the Beautiful Gate, Joachim giving his wife the miraculous kiss; the Virgin ascending the steps of the Temple. These four incidents are all from the apocryphal *Gospel of Mary*, which was, in the Middle Ages, and until the Bible became popularly known by Wickliffe, Luther, and early printing, of greater authority than any other. It was also of ancient authority, and is found transcribed in the works of St. Jerome. Its circulation was part of the great system encouraging Maryolatry pursued by the Church. The Virgin was but three years old when she ascended the steps. The original account of the incident is as follows:—"And there were about the Temple, according to the fifteen Psalms of degrees,* fifteen stairs to ascend, for, the Temple being built

* These are the Psalms from the 120th to the 134th inclusive.

upon a mountain, the altar of burnt-offering, which was without, could not be come near but by stairs. The parents of the Blessed Virgin and Infant placed her on these steps. But while they were putting off their clothes in which they had travelled, and, according to custom, putting on some that were more neat and clean, in the meantime the Virgin of the Lord in such a manner went up the steps one after another, without the help of any to lead her or lift her, that any one would have judged from thence that she was of perfect age." The incident, *Christ taking leave of His mother before going to His death in Jerusalem*, is also from this apocryphal Gospel.

No. 34 in this series is *Christ's Descent into Limbo.* This is also from a text now discredited, but continually painted from in the Middle Ages, the *Gospel of Nicodemos.* In one form of the Apostles' Creed, the *Descent into Hell* is an article of faith, but the incident of Christ's *Harrowing* (harrying, *i.e.* plundering) *of Hell*, as the mystery play styles it, and taking thence Adam and Eve, and John the Baptist, as shown in many early paintings and prints, seems mainly derived from the *Gospel of Nicodemos*, or *The Acts of Pontius Pilate*:—"Then there was a great voice, as of a sound of thunder, saying, Lift up your Gates, ye Princes, and be ye lifted up ye Gates of Hell, that the King of Glory may enter. . . . . And the mighty Lord appeared in the form of a man, and enlightened those places which had ever before been in darkness. . . . . Then he stretched forth his hand and said, Come to me, all ye my Saints, who were created in my image, but who were condemned by the tree of the forbidden fruit, and by the devil and death. . . . . Then the Lord Jesus laid hold on Adam's hand, and said to him, Peace be to thee, and to all thy righteous posterity, which is mine. And he made

the sign of the cross upon Adam, and holding him by the right hand, he ascended from hell, and all the Saints of God followed him."

The last of the series is *The Glorification of Mary*, a frequent finish to the Passion series, and more frequently still treated separately. The motherhood is of course the Glorification, so that, although the scene is supposed to take place in Paradise, she holds the Infant in her arms.

The number of Altdorfer's prints on copper, as given by adding Passavant's additions to Bartsch's list, is 109, many being etchings; his woodcuts, sixty-five. These are probably not the whole of his works by any means, two copper engravings, not hitherto known, having been found lately by Professor Colvin, the intelligent curator of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. These are (1), *St. Christopher landing with the Infant Christ on his shoulders.* The figure is turned to the right, his left hand grasping a tree, which serves for staff. This is a tall-shaped subject, quite unlike the other St. Christopher (B. 19), size 85 mill. by 48. (2) *St. Barbara.* She is seated in profile on a wooden seat, holding a chalice on her knees with her left hand; she is turned to the right; wears crown and necklaces; size, 60 mill. by 37. Both of these small prints have the monogram : the date on the first is rubbed, but on the last is 1506.* Altdorfer's etchings are perhaps more important than any of his other productions, as it was by

* Besides these undescribed characteristic little prints, Professor Colvin has discovered—we use this word because all the prints in the Fitzwilliam were unknown treasures previous to his research—the quasi-unique subjects only described by Schmidt in the article, "Altdorfer," in the new edition (Meyer's) of the *Künstler's Lexikon*—

55. Soldiers standing.

25. St. Catherine seated.

Also all the Ornaments first described by Passavant, numbers 105—8.

the etching point he realised most easily his ideas in landscape. These are slight, but have a truly romantic character, partly intensified and partly destroyed by the eccentric taste that appears in nearly everything from his hand. The pine had a sort of fascination to him, and he loaded its boughs with fronds, like the feathers of birds, and added long lines, vagaries of lines, that have little or no foundation in nature. This singular peculiarity, and also the true taste for landscape, making the figures secondary in interest, we find in other men of the time, derived, I believe, from Altdorfer; Gottfried Liegel, above all the others, indulges in this decorative style, though Rosenberg does not mention this little known artist among his pupils or imitators. Gottfried Liegel's prints date from 1523 to 1540; he might therefore be reasonably supposed to have derived it from Altdorfer. With him, too, the pine tree predominates.

To give the reader an idea of Altdorfer's peculiar feeling for tree forms and vegetation, would be difficult without copies of his prints before us, but the imitation of the drawing in white on a black ground will give him some notion of the erratic lines he indulged in, from boughs of trees, or from weeds hanging from old walls. There is an engraving of the *Crucifixion*, one of his choicest, wherein he has made this great event take place among fir trees, and other examples of his arbitrary love of enriching his compositions by landscape forms, might be easily found. Trees, shrubs, leaves, plants, grass, mountains, towns, fallen walls, and portions of splendid architecture, are all given with thoughtful care, while his drawing of the human actors is very inadequate. Among his larger cuts, there is one, *The Beheading of John* (B. 52), in which is shown in the open air, with curiously rich architecture and landscape

background, a row of figures of men and women down each side of the picture, and in the space between, the body of the Baptist lies on the ground with the executioner standing over him. The people lean forward, looking down, swayed about with emotion, as it were, but so awkwardly expressed, that we have the greatest difficulty in understanding their action, or even separating them from each other. This quaint composition is in a way fascinating, but nothing can be more absurd as a representation of the subject. Another shows us a St. Christopher kneeling down to allow the Child to get on his back; and this difficult moment of action, daringly chosen, is so inexplicable in drawing, as to render the design simply a puzzle. In *Thisbe weeping over the body of Pyramus* (B. 61), she is in the attitude of prayer assumed by Roman Catholic priests, the palms pressed together before her; the Last Supper in the *Fall and Redemption of Man*, takes place lit by a great lattice window, and the Virgin dies apparently in the crypt of a cathedral. These anachronisms, which more or less occur down to the end of the last century, in all art, and above all, in early Flemish and German, are more than usually grotesque and glaring in Altdorfer, yet the sentiment of his thoughts is always to be admired. He never did any single work perfect as a whole, however, and the "Father of Landscape Painting," if he is worthy of the name, is principally to be credited with a blind love of it, and a groping towards the realisation of his affection.

*Altdorfer's drawings.* These are not numerous, but highly finished—indeed, exceptionally so—and consequently much prized and valued. Rosenberg says that no oil pictures of his remain with dates or associations as to time, between 1510 and 1517, and as the engravings are few belonging to those years he thinks Altdorfer must

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI.

By Albrecht Altdorfer.

have given himself to the preparing of drawings. In these he usually employed three tints. First, he laid a dark ground on the paper, either dark green, deep red, brown, or blue. On this he most frequently drew with a fine brush in white, a white which must have been very pure, as it has stood the test of time; then he occasionally added a tint darker than the ground, to bring out the shadows. Both Dürer and Baldung Grün loved this method, but did not use it so clearly and methodically. In this kind of drawing the scenery played the chief part, the figures, as in his prints, being surpassed in importance by their surroundings. His fantastic nature liked this scenic way of expressing itself.

The Berlin cabinet of engravings is rich in these drawings. The copy we give of the *Adoration of the Magi* from that collection bears the date 1512. Others, preserved there, belong to the previous years, as the *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, 1509; *The Entry into Jerusalem*, 1510; *The Bearing of the Cross*, 1511. In the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, is a *Nativity*, which appears to have been a pendant to the *Adoration*. His practice in this way as in engraving was given up in his latest years, although he still painted pictures in oil.

In our British Museum collection there is a Landscape, slight, pen and ink, without light and shade. This drawing is spoilt by a remarkable luminary in the sky, which does not appear to be meant for the sun, possibly some accidental appearance superstitiously rendered. Also *The Repose in Egypt*, a very fine drawing in black and white lines, executed with great precision on a prepared ground of dark brown. The treatment is quite in a familiar *genre* spirit: the execution perfect. The few other drawings in this country with which I am acquainted are these :—*The Angel appearing to*

*Joachim*, drawn with the pen, the property of William Mitchell, Esq.; a *Landscape with Cattle in the foreground.* similarly executed, belonging to S. Tucker, Esq.; and *The Brazen Serpent lifted up*, the treatment singularly unelevated, but an admirable example in execution; pen and ink with the effect in sepia. This was formerly in the Mayor collection, now in that of J. Whitehead, Esq.

Altdorfer was, no doubt, while he lived, most considered as an architect, and next to that as a painter, yet it is difficult now to give him much importance in either walk. The only very notable and unquestionable picture of his I remember is the *Battle of Alexander and Darius*, in the Pinacothec, Munich, already spoken of, but there are a number of others in Bavaria and elsewhere. In this country I hesitate to affirm any picture of his to exist. Altogether there are about twenty-five recognised oil pictures by this master, none of which are known to have left Bavaria in his lifetime, most of them remaining there still.

His earliest, if not his best known, is *The Crucifixion* of 1506, now in the Castle of Nürnberg. This is one of the pictures of sacred subjects, in which the landscape accessories over-balance the figures in point of detail, showing the natural bias of his mind. The whole picture, however, is said to recall the compositions of Albert Dürer. In the Moritz Chapel, in the same city, is a small work in oil: a man and two women drawing from the water the dead body of the holy Quirinus; an effect of sun-light in which is said to be striking. He has the character, indeed, of having painted sunshine at this early time with remarkable success, the *Madonna* in Munich and the *Battle of Alexander and Darius* are said to be both distinguished by this peculiarity. In the Berlin Museum is a small double picture of *SS. Dominic and Francis in Penitence.*

The most beautiful of his early pictures, dated 1507, is in the Public Gallery in Bremen. From the description of it we would expect a very charming and naïve performance. It is a Nativity: the divine Child lies on a bundle of straw surrounded by angel boys. Before him the Virgin kneels, carefully bent over the Infant, fondly adoring it. This is so far only the ordinary elements of the subject, but now comes the portion most characteristic of the artist. Through an opening or window in the roof of the great ruin in which the scene is laid, we catch a glimpse of the dark blue heaven as if it were night. Up to this opening ascends a great ladder, resting on the floor, and beside it stands St. Joseph holding a lantern to light the little angels in their descent, ineffectually it would appear. One is seen at the opening entering with a bundle or sheaf of straw, no doubt to add to the comfort of the little Saviour, but another has come down too fast and lies on the hard ground, while a third runs away from him frightened! To add to the incongruity of the whole, in the middle ground the shepherds are entering by the fallen door, and behind them on the horizon the sun is going down among red clouds.

In the Pinacothec in Munich, besides those already mentioned, is a third—*St. George Vanquishing the Dragon.* The scene is laid in a beech wood, the love of landscape materials being this time greatly in his favour.

In 1521 he painted a small picture, now in the possession of Herrn F. Lippmann, in Vienna, which is reported to possess a more than ordinary charm and interest. It is a landscape in which is a palace or castle, described as a *Renaissanceschloss*, towards the porch of which walks a richly dressed pair, man and woman. In this gate stands a warrior, in whose hand is a

goblet, which he offers to the approaching guests; behind these splendid people, however, are two ragged beggars, who try to seize upon the drapery of the lady. This curious group is supposed to be allegorical—the splendid people being pride and luxury,—a pictorial commentary on the text of a well-known proverb, "*Der Bettel auf der Schleppe sitzt,*" which we may translate with an explanatory word interpolated, "The beggar sits on grandeur's train."

The same collector possesses another so-called landscape with the *Flight into Egypt* and the *Repose* also represented in it. This shows an inscription on a tablet which has somewhat troubled historians. It is this—"*Albertus Altdorfer pictor Ratisponensis in salutem anime hoc tibi munus diva Maria sacravit corde fideli.* 1540." Here our painter dedicates to the holy Mary for the good of his soul, this work in the year 1540, when we know by certain record he died in February, 1538. To cut this Gordian knot various suppositions have been made, the most probable being that the date has been added at a later time than the rest of the inscription.

## CHAPTER VI.

### HANS SEBALD BEHAM AND BARTHEL BEHAM.

HSB HSP BB. BP.

WE now come to the most important artists in the group, the eldest of the two being the one whose works made the most decided impression and were most copied, and whose life was the most exceptionable, so that his character has had to be rehabilitated, and cleared of the accusations that had in the course of years gathered and clung to it. That there may have been some grounds for these accusations it would be rash even now to deny, but we cannot look upon a man of such force of genius and activity of mind with any other feeling than admiration, and a firm belief that his faults, if he had any, were only venial, bred of the fermentation of the eventful time, and necessary to the self-culture of so energetic a nature.

The name of Beham, or Behaim, or Beheym, was not uncommon in Nürnberg long before the two young artists drew attention to it. It was indeed a patrician name in the great commercial imperial city, and had its shield of arms, which appears in all lists of Albert Dürer's wood engravings, the shield divided by a sable bend, dexter

wavy, the crest being an eagle with spread wings and a crown on its neck.* The Michel Behaim for whom Dürer drew this was one of the Rathsherrn at the time of Hans Sebald's birth, but as other Nürnberg families of the same name existed he may have had no near relationship with the family of our artist.

At this time was also in repute in the city Hans Behaim, the master-builder or architect, much praised as a leading agent in the aggrandisement of Nürnberg, which must at that moment have had many splendid mansions in progress in the new style. Von Rettberg in his *Nürnberg's Kunst leben* mentions him in this way; at the same time the hints afforded us of the style in which he wrought do not suggest advanced renaissance architecture so much as the ornate latest form of German pointed ornament. He says that this Hans Behaim was a leading spirit in realising the builder's new art which repudiated the buttress and gargoyle and all the other adjuncts of the gothic, as signs and symbols of the power of the priest (Priesterherrschaft), even then falling out of the respect of the world, and in bringing in an architecture suited to the advanced taste of the age: and in introducing associations of such a kind as would agree with the increased independence of public thought.

Besides this Nürnberg worthy, there was still another contemporary, Behaim, even more honourable. This was the maker of the earliest terrestrial globe, and the adventurer who claims to have been the first to sail round South America. This was Martin Behaim, who began his active life in 1460, by leaving his inland native place for seafaring adventure about the same time as Columbus, and

* A second wood-engraving of the Beham arms appears in Bartsch's list of *Dürer's Doubtful Works*. B, Appendix 57. Passavant thinks the drawing in this resembles more H. S. B. himself than Dürer.

after spending many years in one of the Azores, he had the command of a Portuguese vessel, and discovered Brazil, and the passage between South America and Patagonia, which von Rettberg says should be called Behaim's Straits, not Magellan's, whose survey was only made in 1519.

Besides these, there is mentioned in the city register, a brassfounder, of the name of Sebald Beheim, who was employed by the Rath. During the first ten years of the sixteenth century, he cast and fitted up the great siege guns, then considered a safeguard, and highly valued. Dürer's etching of the cannon (B. 95), standing on wheels with two figures who have been called waggoners, but who are Turks inspecting it, shows the interest these machines excited, and may have been sketched from one of this brassfounder's making. He appears to have had a son who assisted him, Jorg Beheim.*

However, we are ignorant entirely as to the family of Hans Sebald and Barthel, and also regarding their youth. The question as so their education in art is entirely open to speculation, the tradition being,—because the notices in few words of the earliest writers who mention them is little more than tradition,—that they were both in the *atelier* of Dürer, but that Sebald was also indebted for instruction to Barthel, who was supposed to have been his cousin, till the documents relating to the public examination of the two men and their friend, Georg Pencz, when they were accused of heresy and unbelief, proved them to have been brothers. Sebald having been born in 1500, and Barthel two years later, it was highly improbable, that the

* In Johann Neudörfer's *Nachrichten von Künstlern und Werk leuten*, written in 1547, and in Andreas Gulden's addition to the same, there are no fewer than eight Behaims mentioned, including our two artists, all distinguished in Nürnberg about the same time.

PORTRAITS OF SEBALD BEHAM AND BARTHEL BEHAM.
From Medallions in the New Museum, Berlin.

latter should be the more advanced in the art of engraving. In this art, Sebald is perhaps the most expert of all who ever practised it. I mean in purely technical excellence, not even Dürer being his superior.

In the New Museum, Berlin, is a small medallion cut in Speckstein, it is supposed by Sebald himself, with the inscription "Sebolt Beham, Maller, xxxx. jar alt. MDXXXX." This, formerly in the possession of Heinrich van der Borcht, of Frankfort, where Sebald resided the latter years of his life and died, is a genuine record, and shows his age; while another similar medallion, executed nine years earlier, incribed "Bartolme Peham alt xxix. An. xxxi." shows the age of his brother. This inscription, the reader will observe, gives the name beginning with the letter P instead of B, a peculiarity which appears on the monogram inscribed on the earlier works of both brothers, which has troubled the minds of some commentators, but which means nothing more than a habit of that day of indiscriminately using these letters so similar in sound.

Weyerman comes to the conclusion that our painters were descended from a family who came from Ulm in 1399, and that their ancestor was a certain Beham, a painter who was entered as burgher at Nürnberg at this early time, who was outlawed. He gives no evidence whatever, however, and this may be one of the statements that have been gratuitously advanced, and now discredited. Neudörfer (1547) the earliest writer who mentions our two artists, makes them into three. "Sebald Geboren 1500, starb 22 Nov., 1544; Hanns Geboren 10 Aug. 1527; ist answendig gestorben," are his words; but Rosenberg very reasonably questions this statement, and as every one of Sebald's works is inscribed with his initials, the H being included with the S, and the dates of birth are so far

apart, we can scarcely entertain the statement. At the same time a Hans Beham, an artist, not our Hans Sebald, does appear to have lived a few years later, and to have made a model of the city, showing every house and street, which was bought by the Rath for twenty florins.

All this is not without its interest, showing how many men were following very various artistic occupations, and how much activity there was in Nürnberg at that day. The speculations as to Dürer's actual mastership are scarcely so remunerative. Neudörfer says nothing on the subject, but Matthias Quad * calls them both scholars of Dürer; and Doppelmayer, a later writer, however, says Sebald had instruction from Barthel, but yet further instruction from Dürer, "with or for service;" and afterwards he repeats that H. S. B., by means of Dürer, splendidly improved. This, except in relation to Barthel, is very much what we would suppose to have been the case; but as Doppelmayer writes in a great measure after Sandrart, who first reported Barthel to have been the teacher and cousin of Sebald, it does not carry much weight. The circumstance of the elder brother, and executively the ablest of the two, having copied some of his younger brother's works, gave rise, it is supposed, to this fable of their relation as master and pupil.

These copies are no doubt a difficulty; but they may be explained in a probable manner at least. Barthel, it is certain, left Germany, and his plates would most probably become the property of his elder brother, who had no intention of travelling more than he could help. Being forced to leave Nürnberg, he lingered about, while Barthel went to Italy. The sale of these plates went on endlessly as we see by the impressions that are still in circulation,

* *Teutschcr Nation Herrligkcit.* Cölln, 1609.

worn down to a mere spectre. Barthel never returned, probably, and died at an early age, and in his absence. most likely as Rosenberg supposes after his death, the sale still going on, Sebald found it his interest to re-engrave them. Not that he himself had any need to copy, his invention being endless, but his brother's subjects and treatment were popular. This simple reason that a certain design was in demand was in all cases the one explaining the constant habit of copying, which we see to have been followed; in Dürer's case the origin of much injustice and complaint.

What the "service" alluded to by Doppelmayer may have been, it is easy to imagine; but Sebald does not appear from the dates on his prints to have been precocious, only one very small one bearing the date 1518. The next year, when he was nineteen, we find six; but the year following we find twenty-five, all very small however, and, with few exceptions, Bible subjects, or saints. Barthel was less in the habit of dating his engravings, so that it is difficult to determine which were the earlier among them; but still we find three or four dated 1520, when his age would be eighteen.

In 1524, we find them both already married, Barthel being then only twenty-two. Regarding his wife we know nothing, but the medallion existing of Sebald's wife, a companion to his own, and presumably by himself also, is inscribed round the profile, "Anna Behamin, alt xxxxv., jar MDXXXX.," from which we learn that her name was Anna, and that he had married a woman older than himself, according to the frequent habit of very young marrying men.

The evidence of their being both married is to be found in the trial before alluded to. Nürnberg was among the

towns that earliest received the doctrines of the Reformation. Before Luther's movement there had begun a certain satirical independence in this and in other towns, and the earliest literary society founded in Germany, called Sodalitas Literaria Rhenana, was there established by Conrad Celtes, with many members, including Pirkheimer, and the town-clerk Spengler. The Rath was for a time very much opposed, and tried to repress the enthusiasm both of the clergy and the townspeople in different directions. The official break with the old order of things did not take place till 1526. Yet the movement had undermined existing institutions, and the attention of the Imperial Diet had been drawn to efforts constantly being made by the middle classes to organise some opening for the new teaching. In 1523, this had become an important question. The Reformation was at first conservative, and even when a decided revolution changed the whole administration of religion, not an image or an altar was touched. Even now we see this to have been the case; in every Lutheran church the old adjuncts of the Roman forms of worship are to be seen, and the cultus of the Virgin and saints was slowly extinguished. But opposition in periods of excitement produces a revolutionary element which alarms the governing body.

At first the reforming spirit did not threaten actual changes. But the literary agitation that accompanied it, widened its sphere of operation, and men appeared who proposed socialistic novelties to be included in the religious programme, as being the natural and necessary outcome of the doctrines advocated. One of the most influential men of the day was Karlstadt. He held aloof from politics, and yet his extreme theoretical doctrines were thought to be more dangerous than the preaching of Thomas Münzer,

the communist. The excitement broke out in the summer of 1524; Karlstadt was brought before the courts of law, and his books, as well as those of Münzer, published both of them by the enthusiastic printer Hitzel, were confiscated. Münzer had but shortly before come into Nürnberg, but the Rath found him out, and kept the dangerous demagogue in surveillance. Some of his books were again secretly introduced, but the stock of four hundred copies was discovered, and a servant of the bookseller was afterwards taken with five hundred more, and imprisoned. Heinrich Schwerdtfisch, calling himself a "follower of the prophet," and Dr. Martin Reinhard, a preacher from Lena, both indefatigable and loud, were banished.

Our painters, young men and ardently looking to the future, not, it is supposed, actually followers of Münzer, were yet delighted with his innovations. No doubt they were theorists for themselves, secularists or humanitarians, or whatever name might suit them; they seem to have been disputatious, and a certain Veit Wirsperger took upon himself to denounce them to the Rath, and with them their friend and brother artist, Georg Pencz. These three were brought up and strictly examined; the protocol of the case having come down to us, has thrown much explanatory light on the obscure history of their middle life. For the account we are now giving we depend on Dr. von Rosenberg's admirable monograph.

They were accused of being eager readers and disciples of Karlstadt and Münzer, and of being associated with a demagogue, probably Heinrich Schwerdtfisch, who actually denied the right of the governing body of the city, the Rath, to control the citizen in religious matters. Sebald, as the elder, was first examined. He denied having paraded his opinions. Only to one companion had he

confided his conclusions on transubstantiation, in which he had ceased to believe. As to Luther and his writings, he could not yet arrive at any conviction. When young, he had been persuaded to receive the holy sacrament in the Augustinian Church. But he had done it to please; he had had other thoughts in his head, and feared he had done ill. The priest had indeed said or hinted to him that a deep sentiment was not necessary in the recipient of the sacrament, and he had believed him. Baptism, he could neither praise nor condemn; there could be nothing in the application of water.

He again denied having argued or talked to unsuitable or various people. Those with whom he had conversed in a friendly way were the schoolmaster of St. Sebald, Sagus; his brother Barthel; Georg Pencz, a painter; and Veit Glaser's son. The conclusion was that he would be glad to receive instruction and be taught better; he would gladly have his doubts set at rest.

Barthel followed, and also spoke against baptism and the Lord's Supper. He went further than Sebald, and almost denied the absolute perfection of the Holy Scriptures. He admitted having spoken of all these things with many people. He had heard the preacher Osiander (a great theological orator of the day) a full year and a half. What preachers say in the pulpit was mere trifling in his experience. He received no benefit at all.

As to their socialistic tendencies, or political views, they were both more reticent. They were questioned as to their having said that property should be shared equally, and work too, and that none of the privileged authorities should be obeyed; but it does not appear what they answered, except that Barthel claimed to have one supreme authority in God Almighty, his Maker.

These opinions, it will be seen, were not those of any of the Reformers, and must have puzzled the examiners. On a further examination matters were not much mended. In truth, if the date was not perfectly certain, we might think a page out of the nineteenth century relating to communism and rationalism had been mistaken for a record of the sixteenth. Their orthodox accuser, Veit Wirsperger, stated that both brothers were married, and that they had a "lehrling," an apprentice or pupil, Master Sebald Kirchner's son, no doubt insinuating that this *junger* would be brought to the same wicked way of thinking. He proceeded to more serious things he had heard regarding Barthel, and his doubts of the truths of Christianity. He had spoken of our Lord as he would speak of Duke Ernst, who lived in the town. Veit had wished to instruct him, finding he knew next to nothing. Sebald was no less stiff-necked and devil-bound. They had besides led their wives into the same way of thinking!

Georg Pencz, we find, acknowledged plainly many extreme doctrines regarding the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist, and made large deductions from his acceptance of the plenary inspiration of the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. He was Unitarian in his views of the Redeemer.

"The expressed convictions," Rosenberg adds, "of these three enthusiasts is noteworthy. They knew very well what was before them, and had not been without warnings. With respect to their characters, an authentic record like this trial in Nürnberg in 1524 is of the greatest importance." In the judgment given, reasons are stated why it would be troublesome to suffer the three painters to remain as citizens in the town, they are described as reputedly "ostentatious, even insolent, young men, holding themselves high."

To amend, they had three days allowed them, but they went on in such a heathenish way as had scarcely ever been known before. Opposition seemed to have made them antagonistic; they denied the right of the government over their ideas, "a length to which even the schoolmaster had not ventured;" and the three painters became so obnoxious to the townsmen that their lives were scarcely safe. The sentence of banishment was then pronounced.

It would be interesting to know how the sentence was carried out, whether time was allowed to realise property and arrange for the future. Most probably not; they would have to disappear at once under escort, with their wives, and leaving their pupil, "Master Sebald Kirchner's son," to find other masters, unless he or his father were of the same advanced way of thinking, in which case he must have remained with Sebald, the elder brother, who appears to have moved about, because we entirely lose sight of him for some years, and ultimately betook himself to Frankfort. Barthel disappears also; indeed we have few data by which to determine the personal history of that noble artist after this trial and banishment. It is almost certain that he went to Italy and there spent some years, but in what part and how engaged is difficult to conjecture. Neudörfer, who is the earliest authority, says, "Barthel painted the Duke William of Bavaria, who took him into great favour, and who, to advance him in the knowledge of his art, defrayed his expenses travelling in Italy, where he died, still young, in 1540." This meagre account is nearly all the direct testimony regarding his movements, and his age would be thirty-eight in 1540.

Sandrart, who is so often wrong, appears to be right in the present case, though he gives no authority, so that we must accept his account as a tradition, says he made the

journey into Italy, working both at Rome and at Bologna under the direction of Marc' Antonio, for whom he executed many plates that unscrupulous master passed off as his own. This mention of Marc' Antonio at Bologna has an authentic aspect, as the sack of Rome by the army of the Constable Bourbon, after which Marc' Antonio disappears from Italian history and is said to have lost everything, took place in June, 1527. That he lived in Bologna at an earlier date is true, and Passavant evidently supposes this journey under the auspices of Duke William to have been in Barthel's earlier years, as he speaks of his return to Germany being proved by his allegorical composition dated 1525, and inscribed in the German tongue *Der Welthauf*, and his portrait of Erasmus Baldermann of Nürnberg, with the same date.

We now know from the trial records that he was established with his brother at Nürnberg in 1524, and these dates show that he did not return to Italy for a year after. Passavant, pursuing the hint thrown out by Sandrart, considers he finds Barthel's handling in some of Marc' Antonio's more delicate prints, particularly in the *Woman Watering a Plant* (B, 383), in which, besides, he recognises the cast of the drapery as in the manner of Barthel. Also in the *Woman with the Two Sponges* (B, 373), and the *Man and Women holding Bowls* (B, 377), he finds our hero's handiwork. None of these are drawn by Raphael, and may therefore have been made over to a pupil by Marc' Antonio; but the supposition is not supported with anything like the certainty with which we recognise Georg Pencz as the engraver of the *Massacre of the Innocents*, the first plate, the one with the little fir-tree. That he lived in Germany from time to time we may be certain, every one of his own prints being circulated there, and related to

contemporary German work; and we are equally certain of his Italian experiences by the fact of his death having taken place there.

To return to Hans Sebald. The sentence of banishment from Nürnberg does not appear to have been irrevocable in any of their cases, but with Sebald particularly it must have been leniently interpreted, as he continued connected with printers there. In 1526 he illustrated on wood for the printer and *Briefmaler*,* Hans Wandereisen, a book called *Das Babstum* (Papstthum) *The Papacy*. This publication had a satirical character, and Sebald contributed seventy-five small prints, of the dresses principally—this printer in all probability being one of his allies in free thought, and in the agitation against the now partially broken authority of the priesthood. These illustrations are seventy-four in number, upright figures showing the dresses of all the orders and degrees in the Church of Rome, not important in the art-work of the master, but very interesting in relation to their time and in the fact of their extreme rarity. Sebald executed these, it is very probable, before the date of the trial, as we cannot suppose, however leniently treated, that he would be allowed to return within a year to the city, where we know this work was printed, by the colophon, "*Gedruckt zů Nürnberg durch Hanns Wandereisen.*"

No copy of this little book is in the British Museum, nor does any exist perhaps in this country, but Professer Colvin has discovered a complete set, wanting the title, in the

* The Briefmaler, letter or card painter, appears in Jost Ammon's cuts to the book before referred to, *De Omnibus Mechanicis Artibus*, in the act of impressing or stencilling a print. There are three painters represented in the series of cuts, *Der Briefmaler*, *Der Handmaler*, who is the picture painter, and *Der Glasmaler*, who is also painting a picture, but on glass.

Kerrick collections at the Fitzwilliam Museum, at Cambridge. In these figures of priests there is no caricature, properly speaking, but every one has eight lines below it of doggerel poetry of a satirical character. In our British Museum print room, the only record of this book is a few copies having little of Sebald's character.* Jost Ammon copied the whole of them, but with such alterations as made them in a way his own. So rare were they that their existence was even a question, which, however, is set at rest by their discovery by the intelligent custodian of the Fitzwilliam. Every cut has the monogram H.S.B.

At the period of the Reformation the number of monks was very great, not only in Italy, where they continued in multitudes till yesterday, but in Germany, where the two great orders of Black and Grey were in endless feud. But the number of orders as set forth by Sebald is surprising. We have the poor brotherhoods and the rich ones; the St. Josèph's, St. Jerome's, St. Ambrose's (various), St. William's; the order of the Cross and Star, of Humility, of Voluntary Poverty, of the Rolls, of the Celestials; but the variety of costume, even when stencilled by Hans Wandereisen, is not sufficient to make them interesting.

About this time, it may have been, his engraving on wood (B. 164) *The Disputation* may have been done. The disputants are Luther and, possibly, the Romish theologian Eck. Behind this last stands bishop and prelate, a muster of clergy; but behind Luther are secular men and women, peasants and others. We now arrive at a publication which has from the day of its appearance been supposed to indicate a disposition on the part of our painter to avail himself of the ideas of Dürer, in whose studio he may have

* Since the above was in type, Mr. Reid tells me he has acquired for the British Museum a large portion of these prints.

been still, occasionally at least, a visitor, as there exists some evidence, not however particularised by Rosenberg, of his being engaged in some business affairs in the city in 1528.

In this year, on the 6th April, Albert Dürer died, leaving ready for publication his *Four Books of Human Proportions*, an elaborate performance, with endless figures of the nude, male and female, accompanied by scales of proportion. This his widow published, having got Joachim Camerarius, who had been connected with the publication of *The Greater Passion*, to write a long Latin introduction, and had procured a protection from the Emperor, dated 14th August.

Already it had been rumoured that Hieronymus, the wood-engraver, and Sebald Beham were preparing to issue a treatise of a somewhat similar kind, embracing the proportions of the horse, and Camerarius, in his long Latin preface, says that Dürer had prepared drawings of the proportions of the horse, but that these had been stolen; that the thief was known, or as good as known, "but that the worthy man, Albert Dürer, would rather bear the loss and the pain, which were both considerable, than bring the thief to public justice. And there has been, within a year from the disappearance of these drawings, a little book in the German speech which, in a weak and poor way, gave rules for this particular matter. Therefore will I take no more notice of it. If I have not deceived myself the writer has never given any signs of having been ashamed of himself."

This mysterious speech of Camerarius' leaves us to suppose that Hieronymus, who had been frequently occupied in working out Durer's drawings on wood, and possibly Sebald, had been the thieves. We shall see that the

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*By Hans Sebald Beham.*

trifling publication of Sebald and Jerome scarcely answers to the description—does not, in fact, answer at all—and the Frau Dürer, hearing of the approaching publication, applied to the Rath for an interdict, in obedience to which the Rath orders, on the 22nd July, that "Sebald Beham, the painter," and Jerome, the wood-engraver, are not to issue any book on proportions till Dürer's has been published. Sebald replied to this, that he had given his time to the book he had ready, and petitions the Rath for permission to issue it. This is on the 26th August, twelve days after the imperial protection had been granted to the Frau Dürer. The Herren persist in their interdict.

Nevertheless, his *Büchlein*, and a very little book it is, on the *Proportions of the Horse*, was issued the same year, 1528. It bears on the title-page that it is for learners in painting and goldsmith crafts, and is by *Sebaldus Beham Noricus, faciebat*. The name of Jerome, the wood-engraver and print-colourer, does not appear, only at the end we have *Gedruckt* (printed) *zů Nürnberg, im* 1528 *jar*. After so much importance having been attached to this publication, one is disappointed to find it so trifling, containing as it does twelve outlines of very plain geometrical figures, and a few outlines of the horse. In Rosenberg's catalogue of H. S. B.'s works, three only of these are enumerated, but I believe there are one or two additional in the copies of editions 1565, and 1582, in the library of the British Museum. These are generally placed within a square which is divided into many smaller squares, a device usually employed by engravers in enlarging or reducing any original they have to copy. This seems to be done to aid the learner, but it can't be said to show the proportions of the animal, nor do the geometrical figures. On the whole, the *Büchlein* is a make-believe little book on the proportions of

the horse, and certainly the cuts illustrating it can't be the reproductions of the drawings prepared by Albert Dürer, whose work on the *Proportions of the Human Figure* is redundant in measurements.

In the preface, however, Sebald says he has three further works in progress for teaching drawing. First, one on the *Human Face*, which will be very useful to young people; second, on the *Figures of Men and Women;* and third, one on the *Properties of Line and Square*, &c.; and all three will be printed together when God gives time to the painter to carry out his good intentions.

That on the head, which embraces the figure to some extent, is a sort of primitive drawing-book, and was issued long after, in the year 1548, by Christian Egenolff. Of this there continued to be editions till 1605, which was the seventh. It is represented in the British Museum by the editions of 1565 and 1582, which contains also the *Proportions of the Horse*, so-called. In this are many cuts, sixteen in all, treated in the same way as the figures of the horse already described. These comprehend old and young heads, figures of peasants, but no nude figures, two skulls, and the head of a lion.

These art-learners' books are small in size, must have been published as pamphlets at a cheap price, the cuts of the horse bearing the artist's early monogram H. S. P., and were accompanied in the same year by his contributing cuts to books by other writers: the capitals from Vitruvius, copied from his neat copper engravings of the same for *Vitruvius Deutsch*, printed at Nürnberg by John Petri; and followed by eight cuts for another work printed at Frankfort by Egenolff, 1551, which would appear to have been after his death, which had always been placed in 1550.

That he was much interested in education and in the spread of some knowledge of art, these little books show; and the neat and precise copper engravings of the capitals and bases of the classic orders of architecture, and of the human head, testify to the same. In the case of the horse, as we have said, no proportional measurements are given, but in the human head we find a rule for constructing it which is at variance with the antique, showing that he was not in favour of the ideal standard, but of the natural one, the cranium from the edge of the upper eyelid to the crown of the head, measuring one and a half the length of the nose, or of the mouth and chin respectively. In the antique we find the face from the edge of the bone of the chin to the upper edge of the upper eyelid, to be only equal to the brow and cranium, which in nature is very rarely the case. These drawing-books were really insignificant matters, as we may now say, but in their time were important, only before leaving them we may say the action of the Rath, in regard to the *Proportions of the Horse*, appears to have been entirely under a misunderstanding originating with Dürer's representatives, who believed that that great master's stolen sketches were about to be published, or republished, while those given in Sebald's little book cannot have been the same.

If Sebald actually was in Nürnberg at the time of the publication in question, he must have stayed but a short period. Sandrart's account is that he was then in Nürnberg, but living in such a disreputable manner that the ancient dislike to him broke out again, and he had to leave precipitately. That he did live in a careless and independent way there can be little doubt, and the tradition must have existed on which Sandrart based his account. In a catalogue of sketches, &c., apropos to one for the copper engraving

of the *Man and Woman and Death* (B. 152), which the master of tolls and weights (Zoll-und-Waageamt mann) Paul Behaim, of Nürnberg, had in 1618, there is still found inscribed in Latin, "because of this Sebaldus Beham was ejected from the city." * The catalogue is written in German, so that this sentence in Latin seems to be so written in deference to the character of Beham, but the design in question is not extremely or revoltingly indecent like the prints of Marc' Antonio that caused his temporary banishment, or the drawings of J. M. W. Turner, that were destroyed by his admirer Mr. Ruskin, and my friend R. N. Wornum, then secretary of the National Gallery, to which institution the drawings were left; it is only partially and mildly improper. This extreme statement of Paul Behaim, or the extreme measure he alludes to, if it ever took place, shows the severely moral but very unintelligent views of the age. Rosenberg says very truly, so far from immorality being evidently in the artist's mind, we could find a moral lesson in the design. Death is constantly introduced at that period sometimes in a very comic way, but always with a moral intention, and the Latin inscription on the engraving, *Ho. Mors ultima linea rerum*, assists this idea of Sebald being only guilty of *bizarrerie* and bad taste.

The date on this print is 1529. In 1530 he appears to have been in Munich, where Charles the Fifth was entertained at a grand festival as recorded by Sebastian Franck in his Chronicle. At this festival Landsknecht-fights and reviews took place, and many other notable

* The full inscription on the drawing is: "Der Doth hinter 2 nackenten menschen und einem Kindt, *propter quam picturam Sebaldus Beham civitate fuit ejectus.*" The manuscript is in the Cabinet of Engravings, Berlin.

THE EMPEROR CHARLES V.

*By Barthel Beham.*

shows, and Rosenberg thinks Sebald may be credited with the large woodcut representing this entertainment, dated 10th June, 1530. After this he appears as the draftsman of forty-one small designs for the New Testament, prepared by Dr. Johan von Eck, with illustrations on wood by Michael Ostendorfer, Beham, and the master L. B. Of these we may have to speak again.

His next appearance is more important, as marking his residence in Frankfort, where he was now a burgher. The Reformation, long in agitation in that city, took permanent shape in 1533, and the simpler worship of the new form of religion was by law established. Next year the first Bible printed there was brought out by Christian Egenolff, with no fewer than eighty-one designs by Sebald skilfully cut on wood. These were issued as a separate volume also, and edition after edition followed: ten editions being mentioned by Rosenberg, to which the Rev. W. J. Loftie has added another. This seems indeed to have been one of the greatest favourites among sets of Bible prints, and to have enjoyed a popularity equal to those of the *Dance of Death*, by Holbein, and perhaps greater than that master's admirable set for the sacred volume. These were re-engraved, as indeed Holbein's were also, and the copies appear in our first English Bible, Coverdale's Bible, printed about the same time, but by whom, or in what place, are questions still unsettled. The town most probably the birthplace in secret of Coverdale's Bible is Antwerp, but the appearance of these cuts suggested Frankfort. Had they been indeed printed from the original blocks, this suggestion would have been important, but the habit of transferring and re-cutting was so common, that we need not wonder a set of prints passing through so

many editions should travel everywhere, and be reproduced where they were less known than at home.*

In the library of the British Museum are two editions of these Bible designs, one, that of 1539, as we judge by the title being the same as that in Rosenberg's list of that year, although no date is on the British Museum copy. The other title is not that of any of the eleven editions mentioned by that writer. It is as follows :—*Biblicæ Historiæ Artificiosissime depictæ. Biblische Historien figurlich furgebilder. H.S.B.* In these books are seventy-nine woodcuts and title border, eighty, and in one of them is the additional cut sometimes found, of St. Paul, making eighty-one. One of these books has English verses written to each cut in an old hand, some of which are rather curious. Under the first, for example, which is the *Creation of Evë*, the commentator manages to indulge in a witticism at the expense of the sex.

" God maketh man o' the dust o' the earth,
And from the man gives woman birth ;
God having man o' the dust o' the earth
Provides for woman a more noble birth,
And out of dust refinèd He her makes,
While Adam sleeps a rib He from him takes,
And of that rib forms woman, who e'er since
A crooked disposition doth evince."

Under the *Building of the Tower of Babel*, which is vastly like the Castle of St. Angelo at Rome, we have these lines—

" Nimrod by búilding doth intend
As high as heaven to ascend."

* A letter written by Mr. Loftie regarding these woodcuts and Coverdale's Bible in the *Athçnæum*, Nov. 1878, was followed by many other letters on the subject, which the reader may consult with advantage.

"See how Ambition setteth men on fire,
Makes mortalls to be more than men aspire,
That like to people of all sense bereaven,
They seek by Building to climbe up to heaven:
And doe with stone on stone mount up soe high,
The lofty battlements doe brave the sky."

In one of the prints, *Beseleel and Ooliabs*—the cunning workmen who made the sacred vessels for the Temple are represented in the costume of the day of course—amazingly resemble figures in Jost Ammon's trades in the interesting book we have mentioned before. Others of these cuts, especially those of the *High Priest* and *Levites*, whose costumes are described in Leviticus, are in a different spirit, that of the High Priest himself being the original of all others, including that in Calmet's Dictionary, down to the present day.

"Aaron in priestly robes doth stand
With pot of incense in his hand."

The pot of incense being a swinging censer like that used in Roman Catholic churches.

The next set of similar wood-engravings we arrive at, is that of twenty-six subjects for the Revelation of St. John, issued by the same publisher at Frankfort, *Cum privelegio Caes. Majestatis.* Taking all these together into view, and all the elaborate little copper engravings, we would conclude that Sebald had entirely ceased to entertain the doubts of his youth, and had become an orthodox Bible reader; or at all events that his assiduous attention to his art would leave him no time to waste in evil ways. But so far from this being the case, as we touch the last decade of his active, and perhaps feverish, life, we arrive at the most serious accusations of his biographer Sandrart.

He was now entered as a guild-brother in Frankfort, and apparently in remunerative practice, living at the St. Leonard's Gate of that city, when we are told he took a *Weinschenke*, wine-shop or tavern, and that he became associated with objectionable people. It will be remembered that this and the other assertion of his, having to quit Nürnberg on a similar accusation, is for the first time reported by this writer, whose work, *Teutsche Academie*, was published 125 years after the death of the artist he so maligns, and that his other statements are exceedingly inaccurate. We must be slow of accepting the accusation even in any degree as true. Sebald may have speculated in this wine-shop, or may have become implicated in some way that raised such a report; he was erratic and versatile, and in a certain way chalked out his path in life which might not please those about him, but we abstain entirely from believing that the artist, who a few years before was painting the picture now in the Louvre, for the Cardinal-Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz, at his own palace, it is supposed, and also illustrating the Bible in a way that insured the work being re-issued year by year, became suddenly a disreputable tavern-keeper!

This libellous statement of Sandrart published in 1675 was *piquant*, and was repeated by Lersner in his *Chronik von Frankfurt*, and by Kirchner in his *Geschichte dieser Stadt*, and by Doppelmayer in his *Biographical Notices of Artists*, without earlier authority, and no single particle of evidence was asked for by any one. Sandrart's statement itself is false in another respect. He says, "The bad character of his house brought him to his end in 1545," whereas we know with certainty, by the dates on his prints, and by his portrait in the Albertine, Vienna, that he worked for five years later than this on some of his finest

copper-engravings, that two of his set of the *Labours of Hercules* are dated in 1548, and other prints in 1549; and that his death took place on the 22nd November, 1550.

The extremely daring views of Sebald made him obnoxious to these evil reports, but Barthel, who is supposed to have continued his revolutionary creed, does not appear to have been subjected to such accusations. The year after his banishment he engraved twelve of his best copperplates, and the succeeding year a like number, which shows he had a settled studio somewhere. Rosenberg thinks the miniature print of a *Drummer and Standard-bearer*, that Sebald copied in 1544, was a reminiscence of the Peasant's War, and that the names appended to the figures, Acker Consz and Klos Wnezer, are the real names of well-known men in that struggle. But Barthel did not lose the favour of the rulers: he engraved the portrait of Chancellor Leonard von Eck, whose good management at Munich enabled the Dukes William and Ludwig to share the government between them peaceably. Ludwig he also engraved, which of course supposes he first drew or painted the portrait, most likely from nature. Neudörfer, indeed, says Duke William held Barthel in high esteem.

But the personal history of Barthel, as we said, is lost, and even his residence in Italy during the later period of his life is only conjecture, founded on the style of his design and wonderful power of his drawing of the nude, which makes the three friezes of *Fighting Men*, though so minute in size, impress us as if they represented giants.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE WORKS OF THE BEHAMS.

THE change then taking place in German art which is exhibited as much in subject as in treatment, common to all the Little Masters after Altdorfer, is complete in both the Behams, but with a great difference between the two. In the younger brother the Italian influence is unmistakable; he is emancipated from all the ineptitude and wilful despising of the graces, the shortness of figure and coarseness of expression, that we find in those artists who lived at home, and never saw the antiques then being constantly unearthed, nor the pictures of living masters then working in Rome, Florence, and elsewhere. Some natures are immediately modified by contact with such productions in which the æsthetic motive overpowers every other, but the German was slow to adopt foreign art. Dürer, their greatest genius, the typical German, carried back from Venice little love of the milder and richer art he there saw.

Sebald, unlike his brother, remains at home, and we have in his works, a variety scarcely to be found elsewhere. He affects classic subjects one day, and returns the next to the native elements of peasant life, which he depicts in a coarse, direct, humouristic manner. His twelve designs of

the *Labours of Hercules*, although the energy expressed in the action of the naked limbs is admirable, show decidedly his want of acquaintance with, or appreciation of, the long limbs and stately heroism we find allied with strength in the highest art.

In this respect let us examine the set of allegorical figures representing the *Seven Liberal Arts* (B. 121 *et seq.*). These figures show, it may be presumed, Sebald's idea of feminine loveliness, but the stoutness of limb, and the stumpy solidity of the entire persons of the little women, raise an involuntary smile on the face of the most sober observer. The small wings, like fins or flaps, attached to the deltoid muscle, adds to their unique character in art, and the thick soft arms and hands employed in the various actions to express the allegory, add to the completeness of the character. At the same time, the fluttering and fanciful drapery in violent action, blown about by the wind, but enveloping figures in repose, does away entirely with the sculpturesque character any Italian artist of that day treating such figures would have desired to give.

The earliest attempts at the delineation of classic things in the art of the north, as far as we know, are some of the earlier prints of Lucas of Leyden—in the *Youth blowing a Trumpet*, to the two dancing children, and *The Woman feeding the Doe* (B. 152—3), which last I am persuaded Lucas intended to represent Diana.* These are both in the intention of the juvenile artist, emphatically classic, and in the newest spirit of the renaissance, but it is impossible to give the reader a full sense of their absurdity as such.

* We find at this period among the painter-engravers, a prevailing disposition to borrow subjects from each other. Jacob Walch has Apollo and Diana, Dürer follows, and this print by Lucas, I think, is also a Diana.

The abortive naturalism of the nude forms, and the lugubrious ugliness of the children, render the intention truly comic. It would be interesting to know how soon the trade in casts from the antique began, or at what time reduced copies of statues were made and vended. Verrochio is said to have originated the habit of casting from the life, or from the dead face for posthumous busts; but the originator of a trade in reproductions of either full size or in small, of casts from the antique marbles, has, I fear, not been recorded by fame. Certainly Lucas had seen nothing of ancient sculpture when he designed these plates, nor do I think could Sebald when he produced his sturdy young ladies to represent the *Seven Liberal Arts*.

These are undated, but other prints of similar subjects, or subjects from mythology, which we certainly know to be done in his last year or two, show very different proportions of the human figure. *Leda and the Swan* (B. 112), for example, done in 1548, is perfect in power of drawing. The very small series, *The Days of the Week with their Planets* (B. 113—20), which are not so late in execution, are also very different in style of figure. Here we find Saturn represented with a crutch under the left knee, an inexplicable peculiarity common to all early German figures of that ancient god, and Jupiter (Jupider) as a beardless warrior in helmet and cuirass.

Of all his mythological subjects, the series of twelve, the *Labours of Hercules* (B. 96—107), are perhaps the most accomplished. These show very high powers of design and composition, with command over the nude in action, united however to something of the peculiar shortness of stature observable in the *Liberal Arts*, so that the muscular god looks like a powerful dwarf or gnome. Entirely un-Italian, and not the least like the antique in spirit, these,

as well as others by Aldegrever, are exceedingly piquant and interesting, giving an entirely distinct and novel, or rather we should say, foreign, interpretation of the now stale antique fables; the early German earnestness and even ferocity being grafted on the ideal of the semi-allegorical originals; and this combined with a manifest ignorance of the original accounts of the fabulous actions portrayed. But this very ignorance adds to the charm: there is scarcely anything so destructive of good art as learning. Sebald was emancipated from the hide-bound, barren correctness of the schoolmaster, and we feel, examining his prints, emancipated too.

Passing from these to the class of designs illustrating the life of the day, no doubt the most interesting to Sebald, although the "spirit of the age" required him to treat allegory and mythology, we have a quite different field of invention. *The Village Fair*, *The Hochzeit or Merrymaking*, *The Peasant's Wedding*, *The Market Man and Woman*, *The Months represented by Peasants*, are all portrayed admirably, and with a coarse gusto, thoroughly appreciated by the people.

We shall find *The Marriage Procession* a favourite subject with Aldegrever, his large set of *Wedding Guests*, as they are called, is dated 1538; Hans Sebald's small set, called by Bartsch the *Marche des Nouveaux Mariés de Village*, is without date, so that we do not know which was first, but the difference in the social class represented makes the originality of one or other of little importance. Sebald's prints (B. 178–85) shows the *Bauer* and *Bauerin*, stepping out in a hilarious manner, preceded by the bagpipe and horn. In each print we have a pair, every man holding his female companion by the *jupon* or round the waist; only the first represents the musicians and the last the bride herself, between her husband and father. These must

have remained public favourites for a long time; a Flemish *krug* in my possession, dated 1596, having them modelled in relief round the body of the vessel. The festive groups are also peasants, uproarious, and at last ending in a fight, the usual finish to all drinking festivals, in which swords and sticks are freely used, the motto being *Haust du mich so stich ich dich*, "As you strike me I strike you!" (B. 165). Others, again, are gentle and pleasing. In one a very simple pretty girl is introduced to an elderly villager, who

LUXURIOUS LIVING. By Hans Sebald Beham.

has been sitting with a number of others eating and drinking. The old boy rises from the table and takes off his hat to the approaching group. On a banderole above are the words *Alder, du mus danczen*, "Old one, you must dance!" His *Twelve Months of the Year* (B. 154–60), are very characteristic also. They are represented by twelve pairs of peasants, all capering and dancing forward, over each being the supposed name of the male dancer. Each little print represents two pairs: thus the first has

inscribed on it, *Onfang des jars und monat:* with the names *Fabianus Jenner, Mathias Hornung,* "Here begins the year and the month!"—"Fabian January," "Mathias February." Then after all the twelve have run on in the vain attempt to overtake time, comes a supplementary design, showing two humble bare-legged musicians blowing hard at their flageolet and bagpipe, and another boisterous *bauer* pulling his wife on to follow the latest month, "*Nicholas Chistmon,*" and calling out, *Die zwelf monet sen gedhon. Wol auf gredt wir foens wider on!* "The twelve months are gone, Gretel! Let's begin again." How different this is from the purely allegorical figures that began in Italy as early as Giotto and went on to comparatively late days!* There the twelve months would have been nymphs holding flowers, fruit, sickles, pots of fire, or what not, feminine youth being æsthetically the only thing in creation worthy of being painted.

Among other subjects suggested by contemporary or preceding artists, Sebald produced a *Melancholia* (B. 144),

* Of all the great Italian painters and sculptors, the greatest, Michelangelo, alone never indulged in an allegorical figure. The figures on the Medici tombs, usually called Night and Day, Morning and Evening, are not allegorical but representative: they represent conditions of life, Sleeping and Watching, Rest and Unrest. Sleep is for the night, therefore he put an owl beside the figure, that is all the authority for the other figures being allegories of Day, Morning, Evening! In the epigram sent to Michelangelo by Giovanni Strozzi, that poet speaks of the figure with the owl as "La notte." The artist in his answering epigram, speaks of it as if it represented Sleep, which of course it does. Michelangelo's last line is this,

"Però non mi destar, deh parla basso."

The difference between a sculpture representing a mental or bodily condition and an allegorical figure flourishing a suggestive implement is the difference between the natural and the artificial, between poetry and riddles.

altogether like that of Dürer, the genius surrounded by all the implements of science and labour, being, however, treated as a nymph of the peculiarly sturdy proportions of those representing the *Liberal Arts* already noticed. The reader may perhaps recollect that a certain class of critics who could not see why the over-worked genius of science and labour should be called "Melancholy," took refuge in the fanciful interpretation of the figure expressing the number one after the name (Melencholie I.), Dürer having, no doubt, intended to follow the engraving with others as companions. They found it to mean "Melancholy, begone!" the I being the imperative of the Latin verb *eo!* This print by Sebald destroys their fanciful notion, there being nothing after the name, but simply "Melencholie," spelt as in Dürer's larger design.

At this time, and for many years before, while copper-engraving was considered, and very properly, a miniature art, capable of the most amazing fineness and detail, as for example in Sebald's truly wonderful *Coat of Arms with the Cock* (B. 256), wood-engraving, on the contrary, was properly employed on a large scale. Many blocks (the wood being cut with the fibre, in plank) were put together to make one composition. The Kaiser Maximilian was fond of wood-engraving, and Dürer designed for him *The Gate of Triumph*, on 92 large blocks, which, joined together made one picture 11 feet 3 inches by 10 feet wide! Then he had a *Triumphal Chariot* on 8 blocks, and a procession with thousands of figures, on 120 sheets or more, by Burkgmaier, altogether a stupendous pictorial undertaking, which perhaps was never once put together. In fact the emperor died before it was completed. Sebald Beham executed many small designs on wood for the Bible, but he also took up the idea of prodigious dimensions, and

ORNAMENTAL HEADPIECES BY HANS SEBALD BEHAM.

produced a number of prints on several sheets joined together.*

One of these is the *Military Fête in honour of Charles V.*, already mentioned (B. 169), on which, however, his monogram does not appear. Another, much more interesting, is *The Fountain of Youth* (B. 165), nearly four feet long. This splendid design represents a colonnade in renaissance taste and a grand fountain, with a vast bason full to the brim, in which young men and women disport themselves, some sitting under the columns with goblets of wine and musical instruments, others throwing the water of life over each other; while at the far end old decrepit people, singly or in pairs, are carried to the brink to be thrown into the rejuvenating stream.

Neither Bartsch nor Passavant afford a hint as to the origin of this beautiful myth. Was it mediæval? Did it belong to the cycle of the New Atlantis, the Earthly Paradise? I mistook my way in looking for it among Gests and Fableaux. My friend Dr. F. R. Littledale solved the mystery for me; it is not an old fable at all, nor even a European tradition. It was a story brought home from the Caribbean Sea by the mariners then following out the discoveries in the New World. The natives of Puerto Rico made the Spaniards understand that on an island named Bimini, one of the Bahamas, was a fountain

* Mr. G. W. Reid has made a discovery relating to one of H. S. B.'s smaller woodcuts. Number 163 in Bartsch's list is described by that authority as "A man clothed in German fashion, wearing a large flat hat, playing on a species of *basse de viole.*" But this gentleman, though the cypher H. S. P., and date 1529, are on the print, is only the half of the subject, the other half being a lady to whom he plays. The engraving has been done on two pieces of wood, which have seperated, at an early time, so that all the impressions existing, except one or two, show but half the subject.

endowed with the power of rejuvenating those who drank of it. Juan Ponce de Leon spent many years vainly looking out for this island and this fountain. The story early reported in Europe seized hold of people's imaginations and became very popular. Cranach painted it, and Sebald has left us this admirable woodcut of it.

MEMENTO MORI. By H. S. Beham.

It is very worthy of remark that several of the male figures in the water in this *Fountain of Youth* are not merely resembling those of Michelangelo's cartoon of Pisa, they are evidently directly derived from the work of the Florentine. This circumstance, had it been possible to have proved Sebald's having visited Italy by any collateral

argument, would have had great value; as we cannot support such a theory, we must suppose his brother Barthel to have brought home sketches which remained with Sebald.

That Barthel studied the greatest of the Italian masters, and in their greatest works, seems certain. The three friezes representing fighting to the death of naked gladiators—*Combats d'Hommes nuds* they are called by Bartsch (B. 16, 17, 18)—one of them however having the name *Titus Gracchus* on the banderole on the background, are so grandly and nobly drawn, as to be worthy of a place among the masterpieces of European art in that age—the highest of the development of painting, when the Sistine and the Stanze in the Vatican were both receiving from the hands of Michelangelo and Raphael the works that have never since been approached.

Of Barthel's other works on copper we need not speak at length. His brother, probably, indeed almost certainly, as seen by Mr. Loftie's dated Catalogue,* after Barthel's death, copies no fewer than fifteen of his works, showing the high esteem in which they were held both by the copyist and the public. By these copies we know them best, the originals being now so rare. One of these is *Adam and Eve* (B. 1), treated in a mystical spirit. Our first parents stand on either side of the Tree of Knowledge, and between them is Death, who is indeed the stem of the tree itself, and is bound about by the serpent. The effect of this mystical invention is startling. But an additional touch of mysticism baffles one's powers of interpretation. Adam, whose figure is very quiescent, receives

* *Catalogue of the Copper Engravings and Etchings of H. S. Beham, Painter of Nürnberg and Citizen of Frankfort.* By Rev. W. J. Loftie. London: Noseda, 1877.

the apple in his left hand, because his right, suspended by his side, holds a flaming sword!

THE MADONNA AT THE WINDOW. By Barthel Beham.

Another print of the highest order, in beauty of design, is called, by commentators, *The Virgin at the Window*

(B. 8), a name which I think quite gratuitous. The female suckling a child is manifestly a lady, and the house in which she lives is a mansion. She is seated on a settle in the embrasure of a great window; the view out shows us that the house is in a town, and the chamber in which she sits is furnished richly. A pot of flowers stands on the table, but in it is not the lily; she has a veil drawn close over her face, but no nimbus, nor is there any other sign of the sacred drama of the evangelists. In technical manipulation it is as perfect as it is beautiful and unaffectedly natural in design.

Barthel left no wood-engravings; but to return for a few sentences to those by Sebald, we find the profound, though mystic identification of Death with Knowledge, before remarked, borrowed, and reproduced by the elder brother, in the first of his series of the *Ten Patriarchs with their Wives and Children.* Adam and Eve stand under the foliage of the Tree, and Death, whose bony frame is twisted in with the stem, stands between them, with a hand on the shoulder of each.

Sebald's other large wood-engravings are two marauding parties of irregular soldiers, nearly five feet long each. In one (B. 170), we see Death, that popular actor on the art stage of that day, bringing up the rear of the lawless rout.

The entire number of Sebald's works, as near as can be ascertained, is as follows:—

Oil-paintings very few. In the *Salon Carré* of the Louvre is a work in compartments representing the history of King David. This was carried away from Mainz. It was originally a table-top painted for the Cardinal Archbishop.

In Berlin is another oil-painting in compartments,

scenes of baths, shipping, and hunting. And at Aschaffenburg there are five miniatures by him in the Prayer-book of Cardinal Albrecht, preserved in the Royal Library. Various public galleries possess pictures bearing his name, but none of them are with certainty from his hand.

Drawings: 17 are enumerated by Rosenberg; 3 in the Albertina, Vienna; 4 in the Berlin Gallery; and 4 in the Dresden.

Engravings on copper, 272. Wood-engravings, 205, including all the small figures of sacred subjects, and a few ornaments, &c.

Barthel's entire works known are 37 oil-pictures, including a long series of portraits of princes and their families, not greatly spoken of by Rosenberg, now at Schleissheim.

Drawings, 13; all portraits except one at Berlin, and another in the Albertina.

Engravings on copper, 92. None on wood.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HEINRICH ALDEGREVER.

OF all the artists treated of or mentioned by our much admired and valued authority, Herr Rosenberg, the one receiving the smallest measure of justice is Aldegrever, who is really, in point of ability, the greatest of all the Little Masters. Barthel Beham is his equal in power of drawing, but dying so young Barthel left the stage before his work was done, and as said before we lose sight of him for a considerable number of years out of his short career. Hans Sebald was too much occupied with whatever came in his way that promised to be remunerative, to allow his talents undivided action; his drawing-books are worth little, and his Bible woodcuts and others are of little moment; his technical dexterity with the graver remains as his most valuable quality. Altdorfer we have seen to be deficient in the highest attributes of art, the human figure being frequently above his powers. Georg Pencz left the fatherland and subjected himself to Italian influence, both in manipulation and in his invention, while Brosamer and Jacob Binck are of comparatively little consequence.

Aldegrever of all the seven is the most worthy successor to Albert Dürer; and is the greatest master of invention, with the truest German traditions of sentiment and romance, as well as the most prolific ornamentist. He remains all his life skilfully advancing in the command of his graver, to which he remains true. Like Lucas of Leyden, he lives a secluded life, and his miniature prints continue to issue from his hands with more and more richness and independence of poetic thought, until we lose sight of him, dying where he had lived, in the small town of Soest, without any writer to record the particulars of his modest life.

Rosenberg questions his powers of drawing, and implies that his command over the naked human figure was not adequate to express his ideas; but the mastery of his action in some of the *Labours of Hercules*, and the beauty of his female contours in these, as well as in his *Pyramus and Thisbe* (B. 102), *Fortune* (B. 143), and many others, are altogether superior to the vulgar naturalism of some of his contemporaries. His children also, are equally distinguished by perfect form, and with quaintness that gives them a peculiar native charm. Witness *The Dance* (B. 252), partially derived it must be owned from Raphael, *The Alphabet* (B. 250), and many others.

But Aldegrever's greatest power lies in invention; in this he had no scruple in giving his fancy full play, and in the whole circle of art I question whether any master will be found, even among the greatest painters, whose works afford a wider range of original and characteristic thought, or who realises more vividly the scenes he undertakes to depict. We shall illustrate this imaginative force in a future page by describing some of his designs, but at present let me refer to the last of his Susanna series

(B. 30—33), where the two unhappy elders are stoned to death. They are both tied to a column by the hands over their heads, and the right foot which is lifted from the ground by the rope attaching them to the column. One of them has fallen and hangs by one hand, while the brutal executioners are aiming at his head. This design is one of the most painful representations of one of the most savage punishments ever awarded by the laws of an Oriental people; and the contrast between this, the last of the series, and the fair Susanna in the bath in the first, shows great mastery over the dramatic elements of his art.

Our authority, Herr Rosenberg, moreover, although giving Aldegrever the praise of carrying out the Dürer traditions of German art, derives him from Lucas of Leyden, and considers that not only was he never under Dürer's tuition, but never even in Nürnberg; by this means isolating him from the coterie that grew up in the Franconian town, where Jacob Walch had shown the way, and where the neighbourhood of Augsburg, with Burkgmaier and many others, made an atmosphere so beneficial to the rising generation. Karl van Mander reports that Aldegrever painted two wings for an altar-piece in a church in Nürnberg, but this is the only circumstance connecting him with that city, so that we must look for evidence of his having lived there in his works, the execution of which resembles that of Dürer and of Sebald Beham much more closely than Lucas of Leyden. At an early period there existed something that has been called a School of Painting in Westphalia, which could not, however, be distinguished from the School of Cologne. As time went on, the archaic and "Gothic" manner was gradually relaxed, but the art of Aldegrever can only have come out of that of the Cologne School, by leaving it entirely, and following the

new influences, even as Lucas of Leyden left the school of Van Eyck. Rosenberg finds Aldegrever's art "individual and provincial," but if Aldegrever never left his native Westphalia, and never even visited Nürnberg and Augsburg, not to say Florence or Rome, he apprehended the

MADONNA ON THE CRESCENT MOON. By Aldegrever.

movement wonderfully from a distance, and appropriated as much of it as he chose, happily for his works, as much as properly amalgamated with his northern nature. While Lucas of Leyden, beginning almost in childhood, went on to the end of his career imbibing more and more the

foreign freedom and purity, Aldegrever, to the end of his life, retained the northern character, and indulged more in the *bizarrerie* and grotesque invention peculiar to the north.

Henrich Aldegrever was born in 1502, as we learn by the inscriptions on his own portraits by himself. The first of these prints is dated 1530, and inscribed *Aldegrevers hec est praesens pictoris imago Henrici propriæ quam genuere manus. Anno sue ætatis XXVIII.* The second is dated 1537, and inscribed, *Imago Henrici Aldegrevers, Suzatien. Anno Etatis sue XXXV.* This term *Suzatien*, or *Suzatiensis*, Rosenberg considers to imply that he was a burgher of Soest, as well as his having been born there. This ancient town is about the same distance from Munster, the stronghold of the Baptists, and from Dusseldorf, now a centre of artistic activity, but then a place of little consequence. His father was Herman, who appears under different names; the old documentary form of the family name being Alde Grave, which our artist himself employs on one of the Dives and Lazarus subjects, and also Trippenmecker, which seems to have appertained to his trade, maker of wooden shoes. Regarding Herman, we find an interesting record relating to the Reformation, which had spread into Westphalia, but which was opposed by the authorities of Soest. In 1532, when our artist was consequently thirty years of age, and had already issued his *Monk and Nun* (B. 178), a severe satire on the immorality of the orders, in which a Landsknecht, or armed yeoman, comes upon the two by accident at the edge of a wood,—sixteen burghers of the neighbouring town or city of Paderborn, who had taken up the new evangelical views on religion, were apprehended and marched to their trial in a body, when Herman, his hair and beard already grey, and lame

in one foot, supporting himself with a staff, pressed through the crowd, calling out that he too was one of the new faith, and would share in their punishment even to the death. He was laid hold of and led off with the rest, and was only redeemed "by the loss of much money."

A second record in connection with this town of Paderborn still exists, which has raised the question whether or not the family of our artist, and even Henry himself, did not belong to Paderborn, and only to Soest by adoption. The authorities of the latter place are found addressing a manifesto to those of the former, desiring that the property left there by a citizen lately deceased, an ancestor of Henry the painter, should be given up to him as heir. This property consisted of gold, clothes, and jewels. The mention of this last article is somewhat peculiar, and may suggest that the ancestor was a goldsmith, the presumption being that our artist was educated to that calling, the most fruitful of all in the production of painters, whether in Italy or in Germany.

This supposition receives great probability from the fact that, as far as we know, he could not have been brought up directly as an artist in this place, and his earliest dated prints are ornaments evidently designed for goldsmiths' work. This class of designs, moreover, had all his life the greatest attraction to him, about a hundred elaborate miniature engravings of ornaments being found from his hand, no less than sixteen of these being designs for the chased sheaths of daggers, then so fashionable, worn hanging with immensely heavy tassels at the girdle.

If he was not actually a goldsmith, he was in some degree connected with such work, as we find "Hynrich Aldegrave," sends to the *Klevischen supplication-meister*, two seals for the Duke William of Cleves, with the bills of

costs for thirty-five thalers, with the Duke's reply, ordering the sum to be paid. In an age when there were no investments for money, literally none, except lending it either to the government or to private persons, neither of which resources were generally available, the ordinary plans were to keep gold coin secreted, or to place it in valuables of small compass and easily available, and the goldsmith was a much more important person than he is now. The designs indulged in by all the painter-engravers from Israel van Mechen to Holbein, show how much the ornamentation of gold and silver work was esteemed. Aldegrever's designs are among the most beautiful existing, the particular broad leaf being a distinctive, not of his work only, but common to the whole German school of that period, but the *bizarre* and semi-poetic introduction of Cupids and monsters, leaves the Raphaelesque panelling and all other Italian covering ornament entirely out of court.

The bias of Aldegrever against the old clerical *régime*, expressed in the rather indecent satire of the *Monk and Nun*, a subject twice treated by him, is further expressed by the emblematic figure of *Pride* in his series of the Seven Vices (B. 124—30), riding on a careering charger, being decorated by the papal tiara, and by the portraits of Luther and Melancthon he engraved in 1540. Previously to these being done, he had been pointed out by a busybody of the Romish party, called Haverland, who, however, went by the popular name of Daniel, who printed violent pamphlets against innovators. In one of these he says a knowing one in the "society of the preachers, is *Hinrik de Meler* (Henry the painter), one who has been *called* into the cohorts of the Lutherans." In another writing entitled *A Dialogue*, which deals with the shameful

disorderliness of those who have cast off the old authority, this "Daniel come to judgment" speaks of our artist as "Hinrick trippenmecher," and says he painted an indecent picture of Richter Johann von Holk and his beloved sitting together, *ausgezogen nachend und bloss*, represented naked and bare! It would be interesting to find this couple of portraits, of which Rosenberg says, "the hardness and dryness of his style would make innocuous, and these qualities coupled with his want of knowledge of the human form, would make worthless!" Of the first impeachment I say nothing, but the last is simply absurd. At all events, the picture or pictures are not to be found, and the accusation appears to have had no effect whatever.

Straight north of Soest, a good day's journey, lies the city of Munster, with the bishopric founded by Charlemagne, which the Anabaptists of Westphalia, driven to desperation, seized in 1534, and called Mount Zion. Whether the denial of the doctrine of original sin, and the species of communism established therein had any charms for Aldegrever we have no direct means of knowing, but of course the wonderful history of those years and months of excitement under John of Leyden, "King of the Dippers in Water," must have drawn him thither, at least as a spectator. For some time the city was shut against the outside world, but Aldegrever must have had access, as next year, or rather the year after the city was taken (1546) and the ringleaders executed, he published portraits, splendidly elaborated, of *John the Prophet*, and of *Knipperdolling*, the second in command. These portraits are larger than the plates the Little Masters indulged in, with few exceptions, being about a foot high. Fine impressions of these are now very valuable, and we do not know of

any historical portrait more interesting than that of the gorgeously sceptred and attired *John of Leyden*, expressing, as it does, the lurid enthusiasm and cruel vanity of this son of Anak.

The silver thaler, coined by this simulacrum of royalty, was designed by Aldegrever, which commission indeed may have brought him into the presence of John; and another record of this wild episode in history was left by him in the shape of a drawing, which was engraved thirty or forty years later by Virgil Solis, representing the daily life, the life in common, of the sect. Marriage was done away with, and here we see men and women and children, naked and not ashamed, the moral sense sent to sleep by an imaginary principle, lying together on the floor, and sitting side by side on benches. The drawing and style of these figures is grandiose and noble, there is no touch of caricature in the design, yet we cannot suppose this record of the life practised by these enthusiasts to have been made by one actually enrolled in the community.

We have described the peasants' *Wedding Procession* by Sebald Beham. This subject was so great a favourite with Aldegrever that he executed three sets of such groups, two of them very minute in size, and eight in succession; the third larger, the figures being about four inches high, and the set counting twelve. These last were finished in 1538, and are the most excellent authorities for patrician costume of the day. The first in the series—which we must suppose represents the procession conducting home the bride and bridegroom in the evening, though the completion of light and shade necessary to show a night effect had not yet been mastered, or was not thought necessary by the artist; nor can we say which of the pairs of tall, well-conducted, and noble people is really the

JOHN OF LEYDEN.

*From a portrait by Heinrich Aldegrever.*

newly-married—represents the poursuivant or drum-major, a somewhat comic personage, with an ornamental long staff or bâton. He leads the way, and is followed by two torch-bearers, well dressed like the guests themselves, the torches being accommodated with long poles. The nine succeeding groups represent each a gentleman leading a lady. These are attired in splendid fashion, the gentlemen in hose, tight up to the groin, where slashes, with lighter cloth let in, surround the body, the upper part of the person being hidden by a small mantle of fine stuff, the neck rising out of a stiff ornamented edge to the linen shirt, which the *just-a-corps* and mantle allow to be seen on the chest. This shirt-edging is much the same on both sexes, and represents the fashion before the small tight ruff of our early portraits of Henry VIII. appeared. The fully-developed ruff could only be kept perfect by starch, not yet introduced, and was consequently much later than these prints, 1538. The ladies have nearly all of them elaborate head-dresses, which appear over the foreheads like crowns, and are evidently enriched by precious stones; and every one exhibits that artificial elevation in front of the dress which was the forerunner of the martingale or hoop. These ladies are decorated with chains and necklaces, and the poniards and belts of their middle-aged squires are splendidly chased, giving us the highest idea of the goldsmith's art. After all these pairs, walking in a dignified manner, two musicians bring up the rear, blowing trumpets.

These processions of wedding guests were great favourites both in Upper and Lower Germany. The three series must, from the number of impressions still existing, have been immensely circulated. Hans Schaufflein drew on wood a similar set, much larger, of course wood-cuts at that time

WEDDING GUESTS.

By Aldegrever.

taking the large and copper engravings the miniature size; and other sets followed.

But of all the triumphs of Aldegrever in the art of elaborating with the graver his original designs, that of depicting a story in a succession of *tableaux* was his greatest, and evidently gave him most enjoyment. The stories of the earlier books of the Old Testament were his favourite subjects, and these he treated with the greatest freedom. The history of *Amnon and Tamar*, from the Second Book of Samuel, in seven *tableaux;* the histories of *Lot*, of *Susanna*, of *Joseph*, and of *Adam and Eve*, the last in six, the others in four, scenes, all appear among his finest works. Besides these, two from the New Testament exceed all the others in masterly conception: these are *The Good Samaritan* in four, and the history of *Dives and Lazarus* in five pictures.

The last named is perhaps the richest of all, and is certainly the most imaginative. As such it may be the best to describe, so that the reader who may never have seen any of these pictorial narratives may carry away some idea of the extraordinary power of invention they exhibit.

1st. Dives and his friends, ladies and gentlemen, are enjoying an orgie *al fresco;* wines and fruit on the table under a pergola, with waiters and musicians. Dives, a great lord in the then fashionable costume, of course, covered by a small barrette with a feather in it on the side of his head, addresses himself to his neighbour at the table, a young lady, presumably his leman. But the leading impression left by this design is the exhaustion and bodily deterioration of the life here depicted. The physician and the barber-surgeon are both in attendance. The first of these is distinguished, as he always is in the

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, by his action, examining in a glass bottle, held against the light, the liquid which was then considered by its colour or density to indicate all the diseases originating in the digestive organs. In Hans Holbein's *Dance of Death*, for example, the physician is depicted, with the motto, however, "*Medice, cura te ipsum*," as receiving a patient, an old man leaning on a stick, introduced by the unwholesome atrophy who dances throughout the whole set of pictures, holding in his hand this half-filled bottle. In the background of Aldegrever's print the doctor examines this bottle, but the barber-surgeon is in the front, actually relieving by bleeding a lady who seems to have collapsed from over-indulgence, while another sits nakedly in a great tub-bath and smiles at the spectator! A male guest, sitting at the table, also nearly naked, as if he had just emerged from a bath, having still the bathing-cap covering his hair, exhibits what is at first sight a very puzzling peculiarity, small excrescences, in the shape of little vessels, sticking to his body. At this time, all over Europe, blood-letting, either direct by the lancet, or by *cupping*, was the commonest of treatments. In Hartmann Schoper's *De Omnibus Artibus, &c.*, mentioned before, which is a book of curious pictures, by Jost Ammon, of all the trades and callings then practised, we have the bath-master depicted treating a whole family, husband, wife, and two infant children, all, as well as the operator, nearly in a state of nature. On the shoulders of the woman are two of these cups, while the barber-surgeon is fixing a similar pair on the shoulders of the man. In the season of spring everybody in Europe went through this bleeding process, and here we see from Aldegrever that it must have been practised as a relief from excess in eating and drinking.

Dreadful as is this picture in detail, the faces have a quite innocent and beautiful air.

2nd. Dives at home. At table again, but with a few great people like himself. One lackey brings in a number of covered dishes in a pile on the top of each other, and on the other side of the picture the butler issues from a low door with the loving-cup. In the foreground lies Lazarus, an admirably designed figure, holding out unregarded the small wooden alms-dish beggars then carried, his naked limbs being kindly treated by the dogs of the establishment. These animals are studies from nature, somewhat resembling the pointer dogs in Dürer's *St. Hubert*, which were perhaps the first hounds perfectly studied from life since the time of ancient sculpture, and which were accordingly copied and re-copied down to the time of Hollar.

3rd. Dives dies. Here we come to the climax of the rich man's career, when all pleasure is over, and he lies emaciated in bed, regardless of the ministrations of the clerical functionaries, who would too late "teach him how to die." There are no acolytes with candles—nothing of the ritual practised by Romish priests. The minister has the scholar's cap on his head, so that we take him for one of the leaders of the new faith; Aldegrever no doubt holding the old church, with its incantation ceremonial, in contempt. At one side is Dives' wife throwing up her arms in lamentation, while the children cling round her; and on the other comes in an obscene actor in the drama, already visible to the dying man, if to no other—a scaly devil of fearful mien, who has opened a great chest of household treasures, and holds up to the feeble eyes turned to him from the bed, great vases of precious metal—vain consolation!—with a fiendish ridicule on his bestial face.

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Outside we catch a glimpse of a funeral going on its way; Lazarus and Dives depart this life together.

4th. The supernatural prevails. The scaly demon, with his associates, monstrously misshapen giants, with eagles' feet, the chest and arms of Hercules, and face compounded of crocodile and wild boar, yet retaining the power of expressing human emotions of an evil kind, are digging a hole in a burning mountain for the soul of Dives. They are doing this with great glee, while, haled through the air, the still living—now immortal, we should rather say—rich man appears naked in the grasp of a crowd of monstrously misshapen emissaries of hell. The peculiar delight characteristic of German genius, in romantic *diablerie*, bursts out in this design with incredible power. This kind of invention is displayed in both German and Dutch art from a very early time, and the earliest engravers and draftsmen on wood made such subjects as St. Anthony's temptations the themes for endless play of the imagination in this field, compared to which we are ashamed of the puerilities of *Der Freischütz* and other similar *diabolisms* on the stage.

Fifth and last. Dives is fixed in this hole in the burning rocky mountain, guarded by a fiend who lards him with some molten liquid, while on a cloud that has descended close to the earth, a cloud garnished with cherubs, sits Father Abraham, noble, ancient; and partly standing, partly sitting on the patriarch's knee, is Lazarus, now rejuvenated and beautiful to behold, a young man of twenty-five, possessed by a serenity that nothing can mar. Dives looks up at them and points to his mouth, as if praying for a drop of cold water; but it seems from the passivity of expression of the glorified group as if they could not even see him, although so near!

Is not this series of miniature prints a great production? A picture by Raphael is a fair thing and a lovable, though a little commonplace generally, but these are a tragic drama of the highest order of thought. We refrain from speaking of them from the æsthetic point of view; but in that, in their dexterous excellence and endless ability as fine art, lies their highest value; only the reader would require to know them as well as the writer to make our criticism interesting to him.

The oil-pictures by Aldegrever are very few, and they want suavity and richness, being hard and dry, with a leathery-brown tint on the skin. In the gallery at Prague is an authentic picture, with the date 1529, representing Christ sitting on the side of the grave, crowned with thorns. In painting, portraiture was his best side; but only four are known with certainty to be from his hand, the best being reported to be that of a young man with a black cap on his head and a pink in his hand. This is dated 1540, and is in the Leichtenstein Gallery, in Vienna. In Breslau is a portrait of *Philip von Waldeck, in Breslau*, 1535; and in the Brunswick Museum is *Magdalene Wittig*, 1541. The remaining one is *Burgomiester von Lennep*, in the Berlin Museum, in a black furred mantle and barrette, leaning his left hand on a skull.

Although his authentic pictures are so few, those falsely attributed to him are rather numerous. Among the pictures given by Prince Albert to the National Gallery is a *Crucifixion* bearing his name, which no one acquainted with his prints can believe in, and which consequently Sir. C. L. Eastlake never exhibited; and at the sale of Baron Heath's pictures, March 8, 1879, an oil-painting of *John of Leyden* brought 46*l.*; but in no case do we know

of any of the painter-gravers having made an elaborate picture of a subject they executed with the burin.

Passavant has found three engravings on wood by Aldegrever, one of them being a portrait of *Duke William of Cleves*. But the labour of his life was given to engraving his own designs on copper; the number of these, most admirably and carefully finished, amounting, with Passavant's few additions, to 296, must be considered sufficient for the thirty-two years during which he signs his works. He is supposed, but not with certainty, to have died in 1558, at the age of fifty-six.

## CHAPTER IX.

### GEORG PENCZ AND HIS WORKS.

GEORG PENCZ, whom we have seen so closely associated with the Behams, was a native of Nürnberg, born at or before the beginning of the century, being admitted into the Guild of Painters in 1523, when he must have finished his pupilage with Dürer, if indeed he was regularly under the instruction of that master. If not brought up within the household of Dürer he must have been immediately under his influence, and resembled him more than any other of the rising generation in giving his time equally to painting and engraving, and excelling in the nobler art so as to leave all competitors behind.

He seems to have been much favoured by the council of the town, possibly by his connection with citizens of weight, as we find him all through his career employed by the Rath and highly paid, and this notwithstanding the trial for heresy we have previously narrated, when he was associated with the Behams in the sentence of banishment. This took place in 1524, and of all the accused Pencz was the most outspoken and determined, yet we find his banishment must either have been commuted or have been allowed

to drop, as he appears from time to time and receives employment from the city. His banishment deprived him of his citizen-right, and exonerated him from all duties towards the city. This he did not suffer quietly, but petitioned next year for mitigation of his sentence, and was permitted to settle in Windsheim, a place presumably within the jurisdiction of the city, which, however, I cannot find on any map. In a few years he did return, but at what date is not certain, perhaps in 1532, by which time Nürnberg was altogether Protestant by law.

Before the trial for heresy, or rather for unbelief, when Pencz expressed his rationalism with determined bravery, we find him employed to restore the pictures done in 1340 by Graff, one of the earliest recorded jobs in this line, and we have no doubt worked out with the same result that has followed the process to the present day—the substitution of the style of the restorer for that of the original work. This was so early as 1521, and in 1526 he appears to have been in Nürnberg again, associated with Sebald Beham. Six years later he had an appointment from the Rath, so that he could aid with his art in "drawing, painting, and measuring," whenever required. This appointment of Rathsmaler was not very lucrative, as we find he is allowed for his "needs that have been pointed out" the yearly sum or *jahrghelt* of ten gulden, but for each commission he had a specific remuneration. For instance, in 1538, for gilding the borders (framing?) of the great apostle pictures, most likely the two pictures now in the Pinacothec, Munich, by Albert Dürer, he received fifteen gulden. He also executes a view of the *Castle of Ghent*, for which he receives one gulden.

These accidental notices of Pencz, from the archives of the city, are curious in themselves and interesting in relation

JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BRETHREN.

By Georg Pencz.

to our artist, who does not appear to have given much attention to engraving till 1530 at the earliest. The dates on his works are few, but 1535, if we mistake not, is the first. By this date he must have resided in Italy for a length of time, and probably visited that country for the second time, returning but lately.

This question of his visit or visits to Italy is one of unusual importance, from the confidence with which one of the most perfect critics in the art has asserted his belief that one of the very finest and most important engravings of Marc' Antonio is by the hand of Pencz. Passavant, in the fourth volume of the *Peintre-Graveur*, says: "Pencz made the journey to where he frequented the school of Marc' Antonio. The circumstance is placed beyond doubt by an examination of the style of his works at that time, revealing as they do the influence of the Italian School. Among these works we refer to the *Six Triumphs of Petrarch* (B. 117-23), but above all to the *Massacre of the Innocents* (*au chicot*) (B. 18), hitherto considered the original plate by Marc' Antonio himself, the first proofs of which carry no monogram. This piece by our artist is often preferred to (B. 20) the second plate, which is really Marc' Antonio's, although Bartsch attributes it to Mark of Ravenna.

"In comparing these two *chefs-d'œuvre*, B. 18, it is true, is finer and more firm in drawing; but not only does it differ in the graving employed, which is a little more meagre, a little more hard, than that of so consummate an artist as Marc' Antonio; but the expression in the heads has less life, and the strokes of the burin go frequently in a horizontal direction, never seen in Italian work. No. 20 again, which appears unquestionably by Marc' Antonio, has a stroke more free, drawing more full, and greater vivacity

in the heads. Considering everything, we have an entire conviction that the engraving, No. 18 (*au chicot*) has been executed by Georg Pencz, after the original drawing by Raphael."

This confident expression of opinion by I. D. Passavant, in 1863, made a sensation among the collectors and amateurs of Raphael and Marc' Antonio, like that of throwing a bombshell into the midst of a private party. And yet it has been always felt that the greatest Italian master was the most unequal, so much so that Bartsch had to divide the immense mass of his works—between 600 and 700, some very large, showing more labour than the lives of several men would warrant—into four classes, only one of which is truly excellent technically. The above large number, no doubt, embraces those by Augustin Venitiano, and Mark of Ravenna, but he acknowledges besides that Raimondi had many scholars, a great artist like Caraglio working side by side with Beatrizet, Bonasone, and others, still less artistic men, who might be guilty of making six fingers on a hand! Even on the same plate we see the most diverse treatment, showing that several hands, quite differently trained, have worked on it, as, for example, on *The Skeletons* (B. 424), a large design of surpassing interest by Baccio Bandinelli.

We should have liked, however, if Herr Passavant had been more specific in his assertion. We are afraid the sworn admirers of Marc' Antonio could prove an *alibi* in the Italian master's favour, inasmuch as Pencz does not seem to have practised engraving till after the death of Raphael, 1520, and even of Raimondi, the sack of Rome taking place in 1527, when that master of the engraver's art disappears from view. If he engraved the *Massacre of the Innocents*, he must have done it before 1521, when

we find him *restoring* the fourteenth century artist for the city of Nürnberg, while no date appears on any of his own prints till 1535.

Still, as we are ignorant of the year of the birth of Pencz, internal evidence is all-important, and I cannot help agreeing with the great critic, and fancying I see a correspondence between the *Six Triumphs of Petrarch*, and the *Massacre of the Innocents*, in the technical process of execution.

That Georg Pencz was in Rome at a later time, namely, in 1539, we know by his large print after Julio Romano, called *The Taking of Carthage*, signed by him *Georgius Pencz pictor. Niirnberg, Faciebat, Anno MDXXXIX.* At this time we must also suppose he executed *The Prisoners*, a large print attributed to George Ghisi, but which Passavant considers to be by Pencz.

Among his own miniature engravings, which are more interesting to investigate, there are many illustrating the historical portion of the Old Testament, showing the purely naturalistic point of view of the sacred books, held by the artist. In *Abraham and Hagar* (B. 6), for example, we have a beardless Abraham caressing a naked Hagar, while old Sara contentedly peeps in from behind! For the New Testament we find some truly admirable designs. *Christ Sleeping in the Storm* (B. 35), we are inclined to consider the noblest composition ever done of the subject so often treated. Also the *Conversion of St. Paul* (B. 69) is very grandly treated. He is the only one of the Little Masters who has not left a single Madonna.

The most excellent of his works are those for antique fable and mythology. The four subjects, *Thomiris*, *Medea*, *Paris*, and *Procris* (B. 70–3), are truly beautiful; in these we see evidence of Italian influence to such an extent, that

SOPHONISBA.

By Pencz.

no Germanism whatever is left. *The Triton carrying off Anymone* (B. 93), a subject treated by Dürer, is also admirable. A favourite subject at this time with the painter-engravers was the poet, or as he was considered in the middle ages, the magician, Virgil, suspended in a basket. Lucas of Leyden treated it twice, with great elaboration; and Georg Pencz made a pair of his finest miniatures from this story, which may be read in one of the many Volksbücher lately reprinted at Leipsig, or in the more complete work, *Virgilio nel Medio Evo*, by Dom. Comporetti, published a few years ago in Florence. In Pencz's first design we see Virgil suspended in the basket, and in the second, a naked female is seated on a pedestal, surrounded by a crowd with flambeaux and lanterns which they light by contact with her body. The story is a curious one. Virgil becomes a magician at an early age, and performs wonderful things; but he falls in love with a lady in Rome who pretends to be ready to receive him, and lowers a great basket for that purpose; but when half-way up to her window ties the suspending rope and leaves him to be laughed at by the market people in the morning. Virgil, to revenge himself, extinguishes by magic all the fires in Rome, and renders it impossible to procure even light, till, forced by the Kaiser to rectify the mischief, he demands that the lady should appear naked on a pedestal, the only means of obtaining fire again being from her body. This semi-comic incident is the second picture.

The largest of his engravings, except *The Taking of Carthage*, and the other Italian prints said to be by him, is the portrait of *Frederick, Duke of Saxony* (B. 126). This is a very accomplished work. The portrait is surrounded by fourteen shields of the arms of the states subject to the Herzog, which are mantled in the most elaborate manner.

In 1543, the archives of Nürnberg show Pencz employed on an undertaking which we wish commentators had elucidated. Our painter, in conjunction with Sebald Peck, is commissioned at the stately sum of 261 guldens, and 10 lb. of old pence (alte pfennige), to be paid between them, to set out on a ground the city with its belongings, and to make a view of the same. This, as far as we can understand the few words in which it is described, must have been a model to scale, showing in elevation, streets, &c., with possibly a plan on paper. In 1544, the next year, he is elected to paint a *S. Jerome* at the price of 80 guldens, a picture now in the Moritz Chapel, in which the great saint is represented as commentator, in a rich chamber, with many books, as well as with the death's head, and other belongings.

Sandrart, whose information, as we have seen before, is by hearsay and generally incorrect, says he painted on the wall of a chamber a scene that surprised every one. He made it appear that the wall was gone, so that the spectator saw out where the workmen were preparing wood and other materials, in an open country, with clouds floating overhead, and birds flying.

Portrait-painting was also successfully followed by him. In 1536, he painted *Christopher Coller;* also the Austrian general, *Sebald Schirmer*, a Nürnberger by birth. A few years later he painted *Cardinal Granvella*, Chancellor of Charles V., a picture which made a sensation; the son of Pencz having charge of it, to place it in an apartment to be examined by the Herrn, for which he received a present in gold.* In the Berlin Gallery is a portait of a young

* It is interesting to observe in the old German records that the price, or remuneration, is always particularised. In this case the words are Rosenberg's, and not very specific. *Der Knabe erhielt dafür ein "Geldgeschenk."*

man sitting behind a table, which Rosenberg says is like Holbein, but richer and fuller in tone, like good Italian painting. There are also pictures of the painter *Erhard Suetzer* and his wife, *Gattin Elizabeth.* Others by him are to be seen in Gotha, Carlsruhe, and in the Belvedere, Vienna. He also copied Holbein's *Erasmus,* a theologian only second in popularity to Luther, three times, as it appears from the pictures still existing at Windsor, Brunswick, and in the Bruderhouse in Nürnberg, so that, as Rosenberg says, fifteen authentic portraits by Pencz are still known.

His pictures of poetical or other subjects are few. In the Pinacothec, Munich, is *Venus and Cupid,* very Italian in manner; and in Dresden is the *Adoration of the Magi,* described as unfinished or otherwise imperfect. In many galleries are pictures named after him, but they are copies from his engravings.

Pencz died in October, 1550, Neudörfer says, on the same day with his son Egidius. This may have been the case, if he had more sons than one, as again we find the friendly Rath coming out in his favour, presenting his widow with 60 guldens as a fund to be expended in the education of her son. We thus learn that Pencz, with all his varied practice, had not the gift of prudence in the management of his own affairs.

## CHAPTER X.

### JACOB BINCK AND HIS WORKS.

THE Little Masters remaining to be noticed, to complete the number to which they are properly limited, the number seven, are of inferior consequence, and need not detain us so long as those that have gone before. We have already defined the reason of the term *Kleinmeister*, which has passed from the German into other languages, being simply the smallness of the works employing their energies. That is to say, works in the arts of design, because, as we have found, they applied their abilities in various directions; and we shall find that Jacob Binck was principally employed as a portrait-painter and as a military engineer, and his miniature works with the graver would perhaps never have entitled him to take the rank he does, many of them being copies, not original inventions, had it not been that another artist,—whose name is lost, and who produced many admirable works of the same class,—had from an early time been mixed up with him.

The unknown Master I. B. was an original artist of great ability, and an expert of the first order, in expressing himself by means of the graver. He did not employ

himself in copying other artists; out of fifty-nine, there is but one copy, the *Apollo and Diana* of Albert Dürer. But Jacob Binck has left so great a variety in his work, and has employed himself in making so many copies, nearly a third of his prints not being designed by himself, that he is exceptional to the other Little Masters. It is very difficult to believe that the masterly vigour of design and the skilful expression by means of the graver in *Death and the Soldier* (B. 52), is done by the same timid hand and feeble mind originating the portrait of himself (B. 95), or *Bathsheba in the Bath* (B. 6). In this respect he seems to have imitated Marc' Antonio, and availed himself of other hands. His monogram has also exercised the ingenuity of the commentators. When mentioned, he is always spoken of as simply Jacob Binck, while his monogram is composed of three if not four letters. It has been explained as I. B. C., the last letter standing for Coloniensis; but the middle letter is more like G. than C. There is, however, no doubt that the prints bearing this mark are by him, and those with the initials I. B. are not his, some of his best productions, as the portrait of Lucas Gassel, having both monogram and full name.

The first writer to speak of Binck with enthusiasm is Sandrart, who mistakes him all through his account for the artist I. B. He says:—"There lived one called Jacob Binck, whose country is to me unknown. He marked his prints I. B., and issued many of them that show a genius estimable in the arts of design, in the refinement of finish, and in the beauty and perfection of the naked, the draperies, and the wreaths of ornament. He merits indeed from these to be considered the predecessor of good taste. I cite his figures of the *Seven Planets*, the *Triumph of Bacchus*, the *Bacchanalian Children;*" all of which are not

by Binck, but by I. B. Then he proceeds to notice a contemporary artist, who imitated Binck and marked his prints I. C. B., less intelligent and able, but still very creditable!

Binck, according to his own showing, was a native of Cologne, and was born at a date very uncertain, not earlier than 1490, nor later than 1504, probably between these years midway, as he lived certainly till 1568. He is supposed to have been in Nürnberg; to have associated with the Behams, and to have possibly been more or less under Dürer's teaching, but to have travelled to Italy at an early date. The principal occupation of his life was painting, not engraving, and the earliest date on any of his miniature prints is 1520, and the latest 1532, so the application to the art whereby the Little Masters are mainly known was only an episode in his long and varied career, not without considerable distinction and success, at the court of the Danish king and at those of several lesser potentates.

The engravings he did were in subjects similar to those of his contemporaries.

*Bible Subjects and Saints.*—Among these we find *Adam and Eve*, after Beham; and the *Massacre of the Innocents*, after Marc' Antonio (B. 20), the size of the original. This is a close copy, but rather poor and dry in manner, not equal to the Italian. Incidents from the Old Testament he did also, some his own invention, ably designed; and saints, Jerome, George, Catherine, Anthony, the Magdalene, all the most popular ones, and several of the Madonna, in one of which the Virgin sits on a throne ornamented with dolphins; both the mother and Child have the heads surrounded by aureoles, that spread over the whole background. We have her also seated on a throne, surrounded by clouds with many cherubs; and also as the *Virgin of*

*Seven Dolours*, represented by seven swords piercing her bosom, motives very foreign to the German spirit of the time.

*Ancient Mythology.*—In this, the only extensive series he did appear. They are not original designs, but copies from Caraglio's prints after Rosso of Florence, the divinities of fable, a set of twenty, somewhat attitudinising niched figures, beginning with Saturn, and including Ariadne, Hebe, Hercules, Thetis, and others, below the supreme rank. These, as well as the copy from Marc' Antonio's *Massacre of the Innocents*, are supposed to have been done in Italy, but without any good reason, especially as he signs his name at large on the Saturn (B. 26), without mentioning Italy, thus, "Jacobus Binck Coloniensis, fecit, 1530."

*Allegorical Subjects.*—Among these is *Death destroying the Soldier*, which appears to me both in design and handling of the graver quite different and superior to the majority of his works.

*Subjects of Common Life, especially the Life of the Soldier and of the Peasant: and Ornaments.*—These are numerous, and exhibit great observation and artistic ability.

But as we find his life to have been passed mainly as a portrait-painter, the most important of his engravings are also portraits. He removed in middle life to Copenhagen, and from that time, about 1546, we hear of him, either directly as court painter to Christian III., or rather court-artist in general, or at the palace of the Duchess Dorothy of Prussia, his daughter, who replies to her father's application for Binck's return to Copenhagen, that he is not yet finished with certain medallions. We hear of him also at Antwerp, when Christian writes him 3rd October, 1549,

PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF.

By Jacob Binck.

to prepare illustrations to the Bible then to be printed in Copenhagen. In the following year we find him employed in a totally different manner. At Antwerp he had been engaged on a monument, by the Margrave's command, but he returns to Denmark next year, and the king writes to the magistrates of the city of Crempe, in Holstein, 11th May, 1550, that "We have sent our architect, Martin Bussart, and our painter, Jacob Binck, to draw out conjointly the plans for the new fortifications to be constructed." Indeed, when in the Low Countries, where the great towns were early fortified in the most effectual manner, Binck had been occupied in the study of redoubts, gun batteries, &c., as well as gardens, and other works to be introduced in Denmark.

His engravings of Christian II. of Denmark (B. 91) and his queen, Elizabeth of Austria (B. 92), of Francis I. of France (B. 89), and his first Queen, Claude (B. 90), of Lucas Gassel (B. 93), and of himself, as is generally supposed, a *memento mori* portrait, we are able to insert among our illustrations, are all among the best of his works. That of Christian III., not in Bartsch, but added by Passavant (P. 137) surrounded by nine shields of arms, supported by six cupids, is an admirable work. He does not appear to have done much for the Danish Bible, which was published in 1550, and regarding which the king wrote him at Antwerp. The number of his prints is 140.

## HANS BROSAMER AND HIS WORKS.

THIS, our last Little Master, who has left only twenty-nine miniature prints on copper, and about the same number certainly by him on wood, was evidently a wood engraver by profession. His monogram, which has a distinctive ornament on the cross bar of the letter, has also the little knife under it, which so many wood-engravers then adopted; and on one of his portraits on wood, he signs his name at length, "Hans Brosamer, Formschneider zu Erfordt."

There is, however, very little indeed known about Brosamer. He was a native of Fulda, in Hesse Cassel, and lived there from 1536 to 1550, after which we have no works from his hands certain. The last years of his life he passed at Erfurt. Passavant, on whom we depend for the few facts known regarding Brosamer, quotes a communication from C. Becker in the *Kunstblatt* of 1836, in which the writer says he has seen a miniature of Hunold, the Canon of St. Severus, at Erfurt, kneeling before a crucifix, round which were the words—

"Hans Brosamer pinxit qui ☿ peste. 1552."

which he interprets to mean that our artist died of the pest at Erfurt in that year. "There exists, however," Passavant adds, "a large engraving representing *The History of*

*Bathsheba*, signed with a monogram of the letters H B simply, without connection or the ornament on the cross bar of the H, and the date 1554, which print carries the imprint *Gedruckt zu Erffurt bei Hans Cubitzer*. One must conclude that the inscription on the miniature is false, or that it is susceptive of another interpretation." This, which is composed of nine pieces (P. 17) is not said to bear internal evidence of being by Brosamer, and the monogram we see is not that of the artist, so that no conclusion, it would seem, can be drawn from it.

The two letters H. B. united, as well as separate, were in use at the time by several artists, particularly by Hans Baldung Grün, which caused Bartsch to enter three strikingly effective designs among Brosamer's works, which Passavant believes to be by Grün. These are the large woodcut of *The Holy Family* with Joachim and Joseph behind the seats of the Virgin and S. Anne (B. 6); *S. Jerome in the Desert* (B. 7); and the startling invention called *The Sorceress and the Groom* (B. 15), all of which Passavant has, with justice, it appears to me, attributed to Grün.

Of Brosamer's miniatures engraved on copper, the most interesting are those from mythology, showing the aspiration of the artist without the educational appliances necessary to realise the beauty of the antique. One of these is the *Laocoon* (B. 15), showing a daring attempt at a new interpretation of the scene so nobly realised for all time by the ancient sculptor. Had Brosamer seen the group now in the Vatican—but dug up in 1506, in the presence of Michelangelo—or a cast from it, we can scarcely believe he would have ventured to give his own interpretation of the incident. In his design the sons are children—at least one is a child and the other a boy—and there are five or six

snakes of moderate size about the three figures. He indulges also in a subject, sometimes called *Socrates and his wife Zanthippe*, sometimes simply *The Husband subjugated.* This exhibits a lady mounted on a respectable looking old gentleman, who carries her on all fours; in his mouth is a bit by which she guides him, and in her right hand a whip.

Among his authentic woodcuts are some interesting portraits, especially the medical doctor, Georg Sturtz, of Erfurt; Hans Sachs, 1545, the Master-singer; and the more learned but less known poet, Eoben Hess. The portrait of Sachs is not signed, but it has been reproduced in the work by Derschau, with a note from an early manuscript copy, that "Hans Brosamer gave this portrait to the poet of Nürnberg, on his fifty-first anniversary." On this print is the inscription: "1545, Hans Sachs, N. Alter 51, Jar."

So ends the tale of these seven contemporaries, who expressed their inventions by the graver, and generally in the smallest dimensions. But they were followed by others, who almost deserve to be held in equal respect. The habit of designing on the plate, and issuing the prints for sale as independent works of art, did not cease, but was traditionally continued by the skilful hands of Virgil Solis, Theodore de Bry, and others, who, however, did not limit themselves with the same severity to the smallness that rendered the title of LITTLE MASTERS appropriate.

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